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MARGOT

THE COURT SHOEMAKER'S CHILD



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BY

MILLCENT E. MANN

ILLUSTRATED BY

TROY AND MARGARET KINNEY



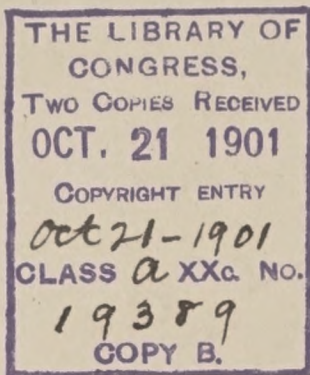
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TO
MY DAUGHTER GLADYS

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M A R G O T

Chapter I

A MESSAGE FROM THE KING



T was an evening in the year 1684. The brazen-throated bell of Notre-Dame rang out upon the still air. A door on the gallery of the second story of an old house fronting the Seine opened, and a child stepped forth. While she listened the noise of the bell ceased, after a louder and longer ding-dong. This last sound came back to her from over the roofs of the crowded city like tinkling music, until it grew so faint, it seemed to float away and lose itself in the mantling clouds. She shaded her eyes from the last rays of the setting sun, which were peeping over the airy mountains seen in the distance, and she looked down the Rue du Pont, one of the thoroughfares of Paris. The old house was of red plaster, its woodwork richly carved and ornamented, but it served to frame a picture fair to look upon, — indeed, a picture not unlike one of those beautiful

creations in stained glass seen in the windows of cathedrals. The child was fair with a northern fairness. Long golden curls encircled a face of exquisite features, not the least of these being a pair of dark eyes. It was Margot Dantier, the court shoemaker's child. She had on a plain but rich frock of green taffeta, relieved from its extreme severity by a snowy collar and undersleeves of fine linen heavily trimmed with lace. It was narrow and short-waisted, as was then the fashion, in imitation of the older folk, and hung in long straight folds down to her ankles, whence peeped forth two tiny feet clad in white suède slippers.

They were daintily shod feet, for was not Sieur Dantier *cordonnier* to the Court of Louis XIV. of France? And did not all the grande dames and fine gentlemen have him make their shoes? Sieur Dantier did not believe in the old saying, "Shoe the horse and shoe the mare, but let the little brown colt go bare." Not he, and Margot's little boots were quite as dainty as Madame the Queen's, only Madame the Queen did not know it, and it was perhaps just as well.

The house in which Margot lived was one of those old houses that fronted on the Seine. They were occupied mostly by tradespeople on account

of the facilities for traffic furnished by the river. Its pointed roof extended back and front over the galleries, like a Swiss *châlet*. The galleries, or balconies as we should call them, were propped up with piles; in front they reached out into the Seine, and formed a covering in rainy weather for those going back and forth to get water for use in the house. In the back they extended over a well-worn footpath.

Margot watched the crowds coming and going; soldiers with military erectness, gay cavaliers on gayly bedecked horses, peasants who shuffled along in wooden sabots, and vassals bent and tired from the toil of the day. Even the beggar pulling his scanty rags more closely about him and shivering, did not escape her eyes.

“Mother!” cried Margot, returning hastily to the room where her mother sat; “Mother, there are two of the King’s soldiers coming up the steps. Hark! they are knocking.”

And so it was. The sound came distinctly to them as one of the men pounded upon the street door with the hilt of his sword, crying: “Open, in the name of the King.”

Margot drew yet nearer her mother. The soldiers were admitted and came up the stairs with

clanking steps into the sitting-room. Madame arose and greeted them.

“Madame, be not alarmed,” said one of the men; “we have a message for Sieur Dantier from the King.”

“Sir, he is not here,” she replied; “I am expecting him every moment. I but now thought he was at Court.”

“Nay, I have but just come from thence. You will let him know as early as you can that ’t is the King’s pleasure he attend on him at once.”

“I will, most assuredly,” replied Madame, for from the faces of the men she knew that the King wished something other than the services of Sieur Dantier in the matter of shoes.

The men bowed low, and courteously took their leave. They went down the long stairs, and on through the darkening hallway, for as yet the candles had not been lit in the sconces. They passed through the workroom, unaware that a slim figure glided like a wraith after them. It stopped them at the street door, saying:—

“Kind sirs, can you tell me what the King may want with my father?”

“Ah!” cried one of the men, who had started at the sound of the childish voice, “’t is Sieur Dantier’s

little Margot." Then he bulged his cheeks out like puff-balls at her as he asked, "What is it, child?"

And Margot repeated her question: "Canst tell me what the King may want with my father?"

"Dost think his Majesty tells all his secrets to his poor soldiers? E'en his courtiers sweat and fume to understand his will, hey, Bertrand?" he said, with a wink at his comrade.

"I do not think it can be more bottines," went on Margot, musingly; "for 't is but a few days since my father sent many, many pairs to the fair ladies there."

"Shoes," he replied, drawing in his breath sharply, "perhaps so. But bother not that little noddle of thine with the weighty matters of state. Perhaps 't is to present to thee a fine new gift," he added, ruffling her long curls over her head teasingly.

"From the King? Oh, no —"

"I see," he interrupted, "thou hast not learned that he whom the King delighteth to honor is honored indeed."

"Cease your teasing," put in the one called Bertrand, who had heretofore kept silent; "we must hence." Turning to Margot, he said: "Child, we know nothing; only it is always well with those who bend graciously to the will of the King."

“Yes, but there is a King above. Is naught to be made of His will?”

“There spoke the little Huguenot,” broke in the other soldier. “Come on, Bertrand, you will come out of the small end of the horn by arguing with her.”

“Remember,” Bertrand stopped long enough to say, his face dark and set, “remember, King Louis hath power over his subjects in the matter of life and death.” And the two men went out the door and into the street.

Margot sat down upon one of the stools near the door, and rested her head upon her hands.

“‘In the matter of life and death,’” she repeated half aloud. “My father hath read some time that He holds us all in the hollow of His hand, — King and subject alike, — I will not be afraid.”

From where she sat she could hear the little sign creak in the slight evening breeze, doing its best to call the attention of passers-by to the trade of the house. It was a weather-stained sign, with a gilded shoe, and the words, Felix Dantier, *Cordonnier*, painted upon it. It hung at the side of the gallery from a stout iron bracket of filigree work.

The room where Margot was, flooded by the waning light which came in through its many high win-

dows, appeared bright in contrast to the murky hallway. The front of the room, above the wainscoting, was of glass, in small diamond-shaped panes, making it as light as the galleries would permit. All the lower part of the house was used for the workroom, and no heavy machinery crowded it. Here the cobblers, with their worn leather aprons tied about them, bent their faces above their work. All day long they sat stitch, stitch, stitching, or peg, peg, pegging, handling dainty things with the deftness of women. Here were made by hand those high-heeled affairs worn by court beauties.

The materials used were exquisite, and the making of shoes was different from what it is to-day — a day of ready-made shoes. Needles plied through the softest of velvets, glossiest of satins, and most pliable of suède. Sometimes they were sent to the convents to be embroidered by the nuns in gay colors, to be beaded, and even to be bespangled with jewels. When sent home in their scented boxes they were indeed things of beauty.

Now the workroom, deserted save for the slim figure seated in the shadowy corner, looked bare and grimy. Benches were ranged along the walls, trays of cobblers' tools and pails of water stood upon the

floor, piles of shoe models littered the corners, and strips of leather hung upon the walls.

Margot Dantier's parents were Huguenots, and she was their only child, now about ten years of age.

She had always lived in this quaint old house, as had her ancestors before her. She was descended from the nobility, as the tiny coat-of-arms — a silver shield with fesse gules and three bezants — cut in the leaded panes of glass over the door of the sitting-room showed.

Her grandfather had dropped the "de" from his name, and taken to trade. Thereby he amassed a fortune, which in time fell to Sieur Dantier, who was now at the head of the shoemaking trade in Paris.

When this story opens King Louis XIV., well called "the Magnificent," had but just taken Madame de Maintenon, a most ardent and devout Catholic, for his wife. This second marriage of their King made the Huguenots feel anxious; still, they trusted in a King who seemed wholly rapt in luxury and in the Edict of Nantes.

Perhaps you may not all know, who read this book, what the Edict of Nantes was. I shall tell you. It was a decree of Henri IV. of France, who reigned in the sixteenth century, that gave to his

Protestant subjects the right to exercise freedom in the matter of religion. It had seemed as if the fair flower of France's nobility would be exterminated unless something were done. At that time murder, rapine, and fire were everywhere, whole families often being wiped out in one bloody fray. You see, there was some excuse for this quarrelling; men could not be expected to change their religion as carelessly as they changed the styles of their hats, and that was about what was expected of them. As a result, men with their families fled from their homes, trusting in their God that He would lead them into some harbor of safety. The Edict of Nantes settled matters for the time being, and there was peace between the different factions.

Chapter II

GOD'S HAND IS HEAVY



ACQUES came into the hallway to light the candles. He espied Margot seated in the workroom, with her eyes steadfastly fixed on something outside of the window.

"Ah, little mistress, out here? I thought thou wast with the Maman," he said.

"Nay, Jacques, I am thinking," she replied.

"Thinking, 'em," Jacques said, and then he smiled.

"Yes. What dost mean, Jacques, when his Majesty sends two of his soldiers with a message for a person, say like my father, other than in the matter of shoes? "

"It might mean many things," he replied evasively.

"But what if he leaves a soldier outside, who walks back and forth like this? " And Margot got up and imitated the measured tread of a soldier on guard.

"'Em, I should say — I should say —" he began slowly; "hast seen any such soldier about?" he finished quickly.

"Mine was the first question, Jacques."

"Pardon, little mistress, I answer it. It were well for the person to be wary."

"Thinkest thou the king would mean him harm."

"That's as it may be," he replied, cautiously, "but I should warn him nevertheless to be wary."

"Jacques, thou hast been with our family a long time, long before ever I was born, methinks," said Margot, after a slight pause, "and thou art a Huguenot. 'Tis many years since the Huguenots had trouble with their Sovereign, is it not? And King Louis hath ever been kind to his subjects, no matter what their belief. Is it not so, my Jacques?"

The old man nodded his head, as he muttered: —

"He hath ever been too busy pursuing the god of pleasure to care for aught else; but now we shall see, — we shall see."

"What dost say, Jacques?"

"'Em, sovereigns are too high and mighty for poor Jacques to understand their various ways. Hark to the little sign; merrily it creaks in the evening breeze. Jacques can understand that."

"Merrily? I but now thought it had a mournful sound."

"Mournful!" he looked at her sharply. "Thou hast been listening to some heart-racking tales of the servants; I have told Dame Babette many a time to cease her ugly tales."

"Nay, I like them."

"Thou mayst like them, but 't is not good for an *enfant* like thee to listen to them so much," he interrupted jealously.

"But I like thine better, Jacques," she said coaxingly. "Dost remember how I always preferred the workroom?"

"Do I remember?" he replied; "I should say! Thou wast no more than two years of age when one day thou wast lost. Maman was weeping, Babette shrieking like a pig. Jacques said, 'Wait, I shall find her.' Then I left them and went and looked into the workroom, emptied of the men, and dark as a pocket. There thou wast kneeling on the floor, playing; sailing a shoe model in a pail of water for a boat. I crept away on tiptoe. I beckoned to them to come and led them to thee. 'There,' I said to Babette, 'there, careless nurse, is thy nursling.' With one shriek she pounced upon thee, and began scolding. But the Maman would

not have it. 'Nay, Babette,' she said, 'take her and put fresh clothes upon her.' Thou wast a sight, smutched from thy curly head to thy tiny boots. Then Madame promised me that thou shouldst come at times to me in the workroom, and pleasant times have they been, my mistress."

"Yes, I do love the old workroom, and 't is pleasant to watch the men making the pretty bottines. But most of all I love to listen to thy stories, — always so many, and so merry, and always with the good ending."

"There are more stored away here," he said, touching his forehead with his finger, and his lips wide in a smile; "many more that thou shalt have for the asking. Now I must finish lighting the candles, else Madame will be after me. Look, the lights are all lit in the houses, and listen to the wind. A storm is coming up. There go the first heavy drops. It was on just such a night, muckily warm, the lightning flashing about, the big drops falling, that, ragged and barefooted, I stole out of the village of Rouen." While speaking Jacques looked out of the window and he stopped.

"Why dost stop, Jacques? Thou wast going to tell me a story," she said, disappointed, for the man had risen and was making as if to go away.

"So I will. Come to-morrow to the workroom at the resting bell. Here comes Sieur now."

"Oh, my father!" cried Margot, running and throwing herself into her father's arms; "I am so glad thou art come. I am so glad."

"There, little one, dost not see Captain Maurtaille?"

"What makes the little maid so glad to see her father especially to-night?" said a hearty voice.

"Oh! this is better and better," Margot cried, and turning she greeted a tall distinguished looking man, dressed as one of the Guards of the Court in all its gay appurtenances. "I am truly glad to see thee; now wilt thou send to the right about that soldier who walks up and down as though he guardeth my father's house. I like it not."

"'Tis even so," said Sieur Dantier, who had walked to the window and looked out. "His Majesty does not want any of his subjects to go out of his kingdom without his leave. You see, Captain Maurtaille, 't will be no easy matter."

Captain Maurtaille did not answer, being entirely engrossed with Margot.

"'Em," growled Jacques, who had discovered the man while talking with Margot, and had been steadily looking at him. "I know the fellow.

He's a cousin on my mother's side. A fellow who loves his tankard well; he's oftener in his cups than not. I will go out and speak to him."

"Let him alone for the present," said Captain Maurtaille; "he is not the only one—I saw another at the south door. Hearken to the rain, how it pours! When the fellow is thoroughly drenched, a tankard and an easy chair will have an even greater attraction for him," he added with a cynical smile. After a pause, in which he seemed to thoroughly enjoy the drenched condition of the soldier, he went on: "Come, let's to Madame. Time is pressing onward."

The Sieur ushered his guest up the stairs and into the sitting-room. It was a beautiful room, large and square, a mixture of the severe and elegant. Everything was massive, even the lintels and mantel-pieces were carved, and had been brought over from Italy years before. None of the frail furniture, which Paris was beginning to use so much, was to be seen. The large windows of many leaded panes of glass were hung with fine curtains of embroidered silk, beneath which were the window seats of embossed leather in a dull red color. A door led out on to the gallery, at the top of which was a transom of glass, where glittered the coat of

arms belonging to the family. At one side of the room stood an immense carved chest. It was used to hold the valuables of the household, whether furs, dresses, money, or jewels. High-backed chairs lined the walls, panelled in shining oak now black with age. The fireplace was of tiles, and shone with its brass andirons and fender. A number of fine paintings and a table of inlaid arabesque work completed the furnishings.

After welcoming their friend, Madame told her husband of the message from the King. His only answer was, "Yes, my dear, I know"; nor would he hear anything more about it until the evening meal was finished, the table cleared, and the chairs drawn about the lighted candles.

Madame was hurrying Margot off to bed, for the message was knocking at her heart, foreboding trouble. She wished to talk with her husband, and also ask the advice of their guest, who, she knew, being stationed at Court, might be able to give some explanation concerning it.

Her husband stopped her and said: —

"Let the child stay. There are going to be perilous times, and it is better she know it. Call Jacques and Babette also."

The old servants came at once and sat down



"LET THE CHILD STAY"

near the door. Babette took up her cushion of lace work, and her lean old fingers, as they worked steadily at it, gleamed like polished ivory.

Margot was very much pleased at being allowed to sit up and also to be admitted into the circle of serious talk. She brought her stool and sat down between the Captain and her father. There was evidently to be no conversation between Captain Maurtaille and herself about the court children and their pets, and she felt a wee bit disappointed. It was such fun to hear of the latest pranks and doings of the Dauphin and his friends. Her father himself never brought home any news from the court, saying, "Their life is not ours." He had never disapproved of Captain Maurtaille's tales, however, and they were highly amusing and delightful to her. She thought what he had to tell to-night might be just as interesting, especially to a maiden with a long line of Huguenot ancestors, so she settled herself to listen.

"Is it perfectly safe? No eaves-droppers near?" first asked the captain, glancing suspiciously at the quiet figures seated near the door.

"Perfectly," *Sieur Dantier* answered. "Have no fear. Jacques and Babette are trusty servants. It is well they should know."

"Before many days," he went on and unconsciously lowered his voice, "there will be trouble for the Huguenots."

"Surely not, surely not. The King is friendly."

"Oh, the King is friendly, when you clash not against his will. What the King meant to-day by those vague hints, which you understood not is this: Soon, it may be even now, the Edict of Nantes will be revoked, and Louis XIV. will sign the paper expelling from France all those who will not change their religion. How many will recant you best know by your own experience to-day."

"The miserable King!" bitterly ejaculated *Sieur Dantier*, "Well do I understand those honeyed words said with such graciousness, nevertheless hiding the threat. 'His pride in his artisans — hoped I would see things clearer — how it would pain him.' 'Put not thy faith in Princes.'"

"What good is it to blame him? He is in the hands of Madame his wife; and ever near her are the Bishop of Bossuet and the wily *Père La Chaise*. The wise man is he who will go before the storm breaks, and wait not until obstacles rise and prisons open."

"Yes, yes, thou art right," *Sieur Dantier* replied, his face knitted in deep thought; "but where, and

how, with those men stationed outside ready to stop us at the first move we make?"

Silence reigned in the room. The candles sputtered, the wicks grew long and black, while the melted wax ran down into little pools on the table. Madame, in her anxiety, did not notice it, and Babette's eyes were glued to her lace work. Her needles clicked evenly on, as if it were a great matter that she point off nicely the little corner of the lace leaf she was working. The clock ticked solemnly on, each tick-tack, seeming a protest against the driving of these good people from their home. A few moments passed thus, then *Sieur Dantier* spoke.

"I have a cousin in the New World," he said; "he settled in an English colony. The place is called Maryland. He hath written me many times to come out to him, for he hath found great comfort in tilling the virgin soil. The natives about him are peaceful. 'Tis there we will go," and his voice was raised enthusiastically; "there, where one may worship the Lord in one's own way."

"'Tis said to be a long voyage by sea, often a dangerous one," said *Madame Dantier*, in a trembling voice.

"We will trust in God's goodness, though all else

fail," answered the Sieur. "I will see what I can do about chartering passage on board a ship. 'Tis a beautiful country, they say," he added musingly.

"Yes, no doubt 'tis a good, fruitful country," replied the Captain, "and I can help you about getting there. It must be done at once. But first we must get rid of that cousin of our good Jacques here." Turning to Jacques, he said: "Do you think he is wet enough to enjoy a pot of mulled ale by now?"

Jacques nodded, and he continued, "Let him think 'tis as easy watching inside as outside."

"He 'll not hold out long against my persuasion," replied Jacques.

"And while you brew the ale, add this sleeping potion," said the Captain, handing him a small phial.

"Nay, no violence," said Sieur Dantier, as Jacques went softly out of the room, intent on his errand.

"Tut, my friend, 't will but rest him a bit. Now, listen to this plan: Yesterday I met by chance, a lucky chance as it turns out, an old friend of mine, a sea captain, Hezekiah Brown by name. He hails from one of the ports of America called Boston, and is trading here with skins and tobacco. His ship lies at Havre. 'Tis not every day an English ship anchors in our port. But now is one of those

times of rare amiability between France and England, — a lull before the storm, — which we shall take advantage of.”

“I see. To-morrow —”

“To-night, man, to-night! To-morrow may be too late!” he interrupted him hastily.

“I cannot go to-night. I must see my friends at the Mercer's Guild, and give some warning of this impending trouble.”

“I think you are rash not to leave to-night.”

“I could not, I could not, my friend,” he said earnestly, laying his hand on Captain Maurtaille's shoulder; “I would never forgive myself, if I went like a coward to save my own skin, and left my poor friends in this peril.”

“Then let Madame take the little maid and go, waiting for you on the way. A few miles from Havre there stands a hut belonging to me. It is a ramshackle place on my estate of D'oën, but it is vacant. They could stay at the castle if it were habitable. Still the hut will do. There they can await you and be safe. If you should happen to be belated, they can go on at the expiration of two days and go aboard the ‘Willing Bark’—’t is the name of the ship—” Here he gave a minute description of the hut and how easiest to reach it.

"Yes, that will be best," said *Sieur Dantier*. "It will give me time to fix up my affairs a bit before leaving. Thou canst get ready in a few hours, dear wife, and go with the child?"

"My place is at thy side. I will abide thy going," said *Madame*.

"Then we will all wait — I cannot go to-night," said her husband.

Captain Maurtaille merely shrugged his broad shoulders, and said: —

"The child ought to be sent on ahead, to-night. I would take her myself, only I am on duty to-morrow, keeping the door at the King's bed chamber. You will be handicapped enough if trouble arises, without the care of a child."

They had been so intent in their talk that they had not noticed the old nurse, who had risen and walked over to the table. She leaned her hand lightly on the back of *Madame's* chair, as she said: "Talk no more about that; I will take her. Thinkest thou, dear *Madame*, at my time of life, I should be separated from my babe? I will take her. What I can do, I will do."

"Ah, *Babette*!" exclaimed *Madame*, putting her arms about the old dame's neck, while now the tears stood in her eyes.

"Truly you are a good woman," said the Captain; "and I am glad that it is so arranged."

Margot had been listening with eyes that had grown big and bigger with astonishment, and she could keep silent no longer.

"Must we go and leave *La belle France*, my father," she said, "our dear old home, and all our friends? How strange it will seem!"

"Alas, yes," he answered.

"But be of good cheer; no doubt you will find much to interest you there," said Captain Maurtaille absently, as he looked from the window. "I see that Jacques has been as good as his word, and his cousin, no doubt, is now snoring in the kitchen. So, my friends, I will go and get a calèche, and wait round the corner by the tannery. In an hour, my good woman, be there with the child."

He would not listen to a word of thanks from either Sieur Dantier or his wife, saying: "I have done what I could for love of this little maiden and all who bear the name of Dantier. Pray God it be for the best. Again I caution you to be discreet. And now, adieu." He went quietly out of the room. All formalities were forgotten, as they sat in a stunned silence, listening to his departing footsteps, which echoed down the stairs, out of the door, and

into the street, where they finally died away, lost in the tumult below.

Now within all was hurry, one hardly knew what to do first. When Madame and Babette had gone from the room intent upon some errand, Sieur Dantier who had kept a quiet face until they had gone, clasped his hands over his forehead and laid his face down on the table in most gloomy thoughts. Breaking up the associations of a lifetime was no easy task; and, then, what dangers might attend such a move!

Margot, seeing her father's sadness, went to him and clasped her arms around his neck.

"Do not be so sad at leaving our home," she said. "We will be safe and happy, I am sure, in that wonderful country. 'T is good there are no kings there."

"Ah, my child, thou dost not know the hardships attending such a move," he answered with a sigh.

"His Majesty is a wicked king to treat his good subjects so."

"There, child, of what avail to be angry? It is the inevitable! Better were it to ask the help of our heavenly Father."

Then Sieur, with Margot kneeling by his side, offered up a fervent prayer to the Father above to

GOD'S HAND IS HEAVY 35

lift the hand of oppression from them, and guard his dear ones from all evil.

Rising from his knees, he was once more himself, energetic and willing, no task too difficult for him to undertake.

Chapter III

THE DEPARTURE



HE calèche with Jacques on the driving seat, waited at the corner ere the hour had struck midnight.

In the out-kitchen, a soldier, who no doubt to-morrow would have a breach of duty to expiate, slept, all unconscious that one bird was fleeing.

By the workroom door, which led out into the street a group of anxious-eyed people stood. Margot clung to her mother's hand, who was talking in a low voice to her. Sieur Dantier looked from the window to see that there was no one in sight. Old Babette, usually prim and slight, was stiff and pompous with responsibility. She made a curiously bulky figure, that she looked like a marionette in a show, and Margot found herself smiling through her tears, whenever she glanced at her. Her corpulency was due to the stuffed condition of her pockets — stuffed with the many letters and greet-

ings to the cousins in the New World, and extra clothing, which she had put on as the easier way of carrying them. She had been firm in her resolution of clinging to her early friends, and Sieur and Madame Dantier were only too glad to accept her services.

Gratitude, than which there is no virtue more to be admired, was firmly imbedded in the old dame's nature.

Few were the words spoken, for there was a great fear over them all lest the absence of the soldier become known to the one stationed at the south door.

"I give my child into thy keeping," in a low voice said Sieur to Babette; "God so deal with thee as thou guardest her, till we meet again. Please God it be soon." To his child he whispered: "Be thou good and brave, remember that the Lord God Jehovah watcheth over thee." And he gave her into her mother's arms for another embrace.

At last the light was extinguished, the door quickly opened and as quickly shut and they were gone.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Madame, weeping bitterly, "I wish I had kept her until we also could go, I feel as if I might never see her again."

“Tut, tut, wife, ’t will be as God wills. This is no time for idle brooding or vain regrets.” And *Sieur Dantier* vigorously blew his nose, and there was a suspicion of tears in his eyes. Perhaps there was the same wish in his heart, — that he too had not let her go.

Margot clung to *Babette’s* hand, while they walked briskly to the corner where the *calèche* was waiting. This was a vacant spot, whereon stood a shanty. Here the hides used by *Sieur Dantier* in his business were cured. In the shadow of this shanty *Captain Maurtaille* waited. He hurried silently forward when he saw them coming, and quickly put *Babette* into the conveyance, her many skirts fluttering around her like a balloon. He took Margot in his arms saying: “Dear child, adieu. May we meet in happier days,” and putting her tenderly in beside *Babette*, he shut the door, and motioned to *Jacques* to go on.

Then the *calèche* with its occupants went flying over the cobblestones of Paris. Amid the tears, which gradually ceased flowing, Margot watched the fast disappearing city; silhouetted houses and trees against the sky looked cheerless enough through the rain and dark. *Babette*, being a wise woman, left her to herself until the weeping had entirely ceased

and a brighter look had come into her tear-stained face.

They rode on in silence for quite a while, each one occupied with her own thoughts. Margot went to put her handkerchief into the reticule which hung by her side, and in doing so her hand hit against something hard. Immediately her thoughts were turned into a new channel.

She pulled from her reticule a small package done up in a velvet cloth. When she had unwrapped this, and brought it close under the dim rays of the carriage lamp, it proved to be a miniature. Such a dainty miniature! framed about with a twisted band of gold, where diamonds glittered. Margot looked earnestly at it, turning it now this way and now that, trying to get a good light upon it.

Babette's brow had a deep wrinkle across it. She was thinking of a village miles and miles away, nestled among the vineclad hills of the south of France. She was looking through the long vista of many years. She saw herself a lass again, who, together with the neighboring lads and lasses gathered the purple grapes and carried them to the big bins, there to have their juice pressed out by the dancing of many feet.

A sudden jolting of the calèche as one wheel

went down into a deep rut, made them feel in imminent danger of being thrown out upon the muddy road. Margot uttered a startled cry, for her miniature had been almost jerked from her hand. Crack, crack went the long lash of Jacques' whip, curling about his horses' heads, and the calèche was righted.

"*Sapristi!* What hast thou there?" asked Babette, her dreams scattered. "My, my! It surely is not that little miniature thy mother values so highly, and hath always kept in the big drawer in her carved chest? How didst thou come by it?" Margot kept nodding her head in a knowing way, while Babette was speaking.

"Yes, it is mine."

"Thine, child? What can thy mother mean by giving a child like thee such a handsome thing? Thou hadst better let me have it to take care of for thee. I can put it in the case with the other jewels."

"No, Babette, I mean to take care of it myself. I shall be very careful not to scratch it. I have this velvet bag to carry it in. I'm so proud of it." And she looked lovingly at the costly gift.

"And well thou mayst be proud of it," said Babette, letting the light play upon the stones till they sparkled a million colors. "They are beautiful stones!"

“Like a rainbow cut up into little bits, are they not? ’Tis not on account of the pretty stones, though, I value it so much, but of the pictured face they encircle.”

“Pretty enough,” said she, her eyes still glued to the shining diamonds. “But thou hast not told me how the Maman came to give it to thee?”

“Maman was so sad, so sad, when taking out the clothes I was to wear. As she lifted out the drawer to get something from the bottom part I saw the miniature and took it to look at for a minute. I did not dream it would soon be mine! Then Maman said, ‘Margot, thou rememberest the story of the child whose face is portrayed there?’ I told her that I did indeed, almost every word. Then she said, ‘Thou art not a child that cares for dolls, or gewgaws, or things of that kind, so thou shalt have something that shall help thee, and also be a keepsake from thy old home. Thou shalt have the miniature of Louis de la Dantier. Keep it if thou canst, but if aught happen to it — for ’tis a costly thing for a child to have — it will not matter, only if thou hath the pictured face and its story in thy heart. Remember there has never been a Dantier that was not proud to bear all the trials God put upon him.’ So Maman spake and, putting the

miniature securely in its velvet bag, she gave it to me."

"Dost think I look like him?" she asked after a slight pause.

The picture was indeed like her — the portrait of a young lad painted upon porcelain. It showed the same big brown eyes, looking out into the world with a questioning gaze, the same straight nose, the same bowed lips and mass of curling hair, only in the picture the hair was worn short about the neck, whereas Margot's hung down to her waist.

"Thou art the image of him; indeed, I'd say 't was thine own face, if it were not for this long hair," answered Babette, taking up a long curl.

"Yes," said Margot, flinging back the hair from her face, "I am glad my mother gave it to me, Thou see'st he was not an ordinary boy; he saved a number of people from a horrible death. He hath a story," she added, in the most solemn way. "Shall I tell it to thee, Babette?"

"Yes, child," she answered, as she kissed the eager face raised to hers. "I'm sure he hath a sweet look. 'Tis a pity that thou wast not a boy. Girls are but tender blossoms from the parent plant, whilst boys are hardy sprigs."

Chapter IV

THE STORY OF LOUIS DE LA DANTIER



NCE upon a time, — 't is said all old stories begin that way, Babette, — there lived on the outskirts of Paris a young lad. His name was Louis de la Dantier. On a hot day in August in the year of our Lord 1572, he was sent on an errand to the home of relatives in Paris, with only a young waiting lad as his companion. There was no one else to send with him, as all the armed retainers of the household had gone with his father to Mayenne. Thou knowest, Babette, in those olden days every man's house was a fortress, and armed men were kept to protect its inhabitants in case of quarrels between different factions. It seemeth strange to me that people must needs quarrel so, Babette, does it not to thee?" she stopped her story to ask.

"'T is because they are so wicked, so wicked. They will never learn to do as the good Jesus said :

‘Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.’ But go on with thy story.”

“The times were now peaceful; everything was quiet between the Huguenots and the Catholics. Henry of Navarre, a Protestant, had but just married Margaret, the King’s sister. Catherine de Medici, the Queen mother, had seemed lately to favor Protestantism, so that even Admiral Coligny, the Huguenot leader, feared nothing, and was in the city. Louis arrived at the house of his friends and, his errand over, was asked to spend the night with the young people. He was only too glad to do so, for, with the exception of Madame and a few servants, they were all alone in the big house, and he knew they would have great fun frolicking. He sent a message by the boy to his mother, telling her that he should be home on the morrow. In the midst of their play one of the older children called the attention of the others to the sunset. It was beautiful but awesome! A flood of crimson glory! The children were covered with its rays as if they were bathed in blood. ’T was said afterwards that it was a warning sent by God—a warning, but of what they knew not as yet—being too easy and confident in themselves and their King. The chil-

dren, somewhat subdued, went tired to bed. The city seemed to Louis like one of those monster ant hills he had oft kicked over, so quiet on the outside but swarming with busy workers inside. He could not shut his eyes. How many hours he spent thus trying to get to sleep he knew not. All on a sudden he heard a shot fired, then the pealing of a bell. It was the bell of St. Germain L'Auxerrois, that rang in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. He jumped up and tiptoed to the window. He looked out. The streets were thronged with men. He saw the soldiers under the Duke de Guise surrounding the house of Admiral Coligny, only a few doors away. The many links held by armed men flamed up and threw out lurid gleams. He could even see from where he was the face of the Duke de Guise in all its terrible beauty. Its horrible fascination held Louis until, hearing a terrific shout, he knew that Admiral Coligny was no more."

"And then died a mighty leader," interrupted Babette. "It seemeth to me as if they were ever killing one another, those people, then."

"Yes, it was long years before a ruler in France died a natural death, so my mother hath told me. It was the work of an instant for Louis to slip on his clothes and arouse Madame. They

dared not even let the servants know, lest there be a spy among them. When Madame saw the crowd of hostile men, a very rabble of bloodthirsty creatures, she knew they were in great danger. Silently they crept down the long, broad stairs, terrible in their black gloom, save when the glare from some nearby torch came in through the many windows and lit up its interior. Then the girls, cowering, shrank nearer their mother, and the eldest boy mustered up courage to say: 'Hasten, it is naught but the light from a torch.' They slipped out of the servants' door, and escaped down an alley to the rear of the house. Madame hastened with her children, one of them a babe in arms, to the hut of old nurse, a Catholic, but one she knew would hide her for the love she bore her. There she stayed with her children, guarded by the old dame, who fed and took care of them. Not even her nearest neighbor knew what a precious burden her attic held. Before the disturbance was over, Madame's husband secretly returned to Paris. He hunted high and low for his family. He became almost wild with the fear that his dear ones were among the dead, for it was long before the faithful old nurse could find means of letting him know where they were hidden, without arousing suspicion. In the

dead of night Monsieur took them away. It was time, for the confinement and the momentary fear of being caught had been almost too much for the active little ones. Babette, I should have died of fright had I lived then."

"Thou must learn to be brave. But I am glad we did n't live then; times are hard enough now, when honest folk have to leave their homes in secret," grumbled the old dame.

The child nodded her head dreamily. Her thoughts were on her story and events that had taken place hundreds of years before. Her mind was a perfect storehouse of such tales, always kept well-filled by old Jacques and her mother, for she was insatiable in her demands for more and in repeating them she seldom missed a detail. Margot continued:—

"There is a beautiful story about that same Madame and the loyalty of that old nurse of hers—but 't is of Louis de la Dantier I am telling—Louis the brave, Louis the good-hearted. Madame and the children pleaded with him to stay in hiding with them, but he would not. He knew that as soon as the attack was over in the city, the mob would begin on the outlying towns. Their place was the first large landed estate outside of Paris,

and would be the first to be attacked. He thought of his mother and his sisters, all alone without a protector save old Pierre, half blind and decrepid with age, and fear lent wings to his feet. He hurried down all the secluded streets he could, and would hide in some darkened doorway when he heard a troop of soldiers coming. There were times when he mixed with the crowd, assuming a boldness he was far from feeling. He was once stopped by three villanous looking men, their pikes dripping blood and mad with the lust of it. Gladly would he have escaped, but he was not quick enough. One of the men made a lunge at him with his pike, when, quick as thought, Louis caught up the little silver cross, which hung about his neck, and held it out to them. It was his reward of merit given him by a father at the college where he attended. It was a happy chance that he had it on. One of the men, more good-natured than the others, who wanted to kill him whether Catholic or Protestant, said: 'Let the boy alone, are there not enough Huguenots with rich red blood to prick?' Then they began disputing with each other, which gave Louis an opportunity to slip away. He did not, I assure thee, look back to see how the quarrel ended — whether the three

strode amiably on arm in arm, or whether they left one weltering in his blood on the ground. The time seemed ages long to him as he hurried through that fearsome city. His blood was almost congealed and his hair stood on end at the sights he saw — for the dead and dying lay scattered about the streets, there being many killed at that early hour. At length he reached the gates, only to find them closed. But he did not despair at that, for was not Émile Croix, — the warder, an old friend of the family? Many a ride on his pony had he given Émile's little lame boy. Was there ever a feast day that he forgot Henri, whose birthday was the same as his? Did not Madame de la Dantier always send flannels and linen to the many new babies that were ever coming to Émile's house? Louis summoned up his courage and knocked at the door of the warder's house, which formed part of the old gate of Paris. There was no answer. He thought to himself what if Émile had gone to join the rabble in the city? No matter, he must get in somehow or other. He pounded on the door with all his might, calling the man's name repeatedly, in his frenzy not caring whether he aroused the neighbors or not. At last Émile came yawning, as if he had but just awakened. Ah,

sleep had been far from Émile's eyes that night! Louis now breathed a sigh of relief.

“‘Ah, Émile, at last thou comest!’ he said. ‘Open the gates for me; I must go out and home-ward.’

“‘I cannot, Monsieur Louis,’ he replied, ‘I have not the key.’

“‘Where is it?’ asked Louis.

‘I know not. They have taken it away.’

“Louis was greatly upset then, for he had hoped to borrow Émile's old black horse, on whose back he knew it would not take him many minutes to reach his home. Then he asked the warder if he knew what the people were doing over there — meaning in the heart of the city.

“‘I fear me I do,’ he replied, ‘but I shall have naught to do with it.’ Babette, he was a Catholic too; thou knowest there are good and bad in all. And Captain Maurtaille is a descendant of that very gate-keeper.”

“Well, I am surprised that he should be a Papist,” said the old dame.

“Yet he is a good man, Babette.”

Babette grudgingly admitted that he was, and Margot continued her tale.

“Louis persuaded the warder to let him get

out through one of the windows. From there he climbed down the stone masonry of the old gate, and was off on a run. How glad was he of his fleetness of foot, and that his country life had made his muscles hard as steel. As he ran, taking great leaps like an antelope, his mind kept ringing with these words. 'Where hide them? where hide them? Mother will know what to do,' he thought, 'but there is so little time, even now as I run the mounted men may be issuing out of the gates to scour the country side.' Louis looked over his shoulder and half stopped in his fear to listen. All was still. 'Hide them, hide them,' he kept saying half aloud, when a thought so pleasant struck him that he unconsciously slackened his speed and in his delight heard no longer the hoarse cries of '*A bas les Huguenots*' or the shrill wails of the dying. His home was one of those old manor-houses rarely seen now. It had been built in feudal times. In it there was a secret passage, entered by a panel in the wall. It led into a steep stair-way, down which you came into a subterranean room, built under the house, all nicely furnished and very cozy. It had never been used in Louis' time except by the children in their play. 'T was the thought of this secret room, that had brought

such contentment to the boy. The women could go down there and stay until the passion of the people was satisfied. Even if the house were burned they would be safe. As for him, he should take old Calino, the fleetest horse in the stable, and warn all the Huguenots he could.

“ He reached home, panting and almost breathless. He aroused his people and told them the horrible news. His mother, a brave and true woman, with the help of her maids hastened to make everything ready. It was hard for Madame to let her only son take any more risk, but she conquered herself and sent him off with a ‘God bless thee,’ for dear to her were the people in the neighboring châteaux. She promised Louis as soon as they saw the dust flying down the road, showing that the mob was coming, to go into the secret passage, and on down into the room, Pierre alone being left to inform them that the family had gone away.

“ The rising sun was just peeping over the distant hill tops when the hostile party, headed by some of the most influential men of the day, reached the Manor, where they stopped. They found it seemingly deserted. They were disappointed but in their hurry to get on did but little damage. Finding the next two châteaux also vacant, they began to wonder

who had spread the alarm, for they had been the first of the mounted men to ride out of Paris that day. The vandals vented all their fury upon the third manor, stopping long enough to set it afire. On, on, went Louis urging old Calino, but in vain; Calino's day was done. Louis led him off the highway, far enough so he could not be seen, and there Calino, faithful horse, breathed his last. Louis hid down an old well, from the brink of which, far off, he watched the men trooping past. Was he not a brave boy, Babette?"

"Yes, indeed," she answered. "The dangers of those times bred brave boys and girls, too — see that thou dost become one."

"Indeed I will be one. There is not much more to tell. A few days later Louis dared go home. He had very many hair-breadth escapes, though, before he reached there. Madame and the family remained quietly hiding, until Monsieur de la Dantier, coming home in all haste with his armed men, took them to his more secluded manor in Mayenne. When Louis grew old enough he entered the service of Henri of Navarre, who became Henri IV., after the death of King Henry III. Louis de la Dantier was made much of by the king because of the services he had rendered in saving so many

Huguenots, some of whom, children at that time, later became famous. It was a matter of admiration to King Henri IV. that a young lad should so have outwitted such great men, nor was Louis the only lad to become noted for his bravery during those turbulent days. Because of his valor and greater fame, he was created Count Louis de la Dantier of Vailleurbanne and Sainte Armand, and the coat-of-arms — a silver shield with three bezants on its crimson fesse — bestowed upon him. It is from that branch of the family we are descended.”

Margot stopped, her story ended, and looked at Babette. She was sound asleep.

Chapter V

BABETTE'S DREAM



ATISFIED that Babette was sleeping, Margot leaned back against the cushions of the calèche, while looking drowsily out on the beautiful country, which disappeared rapidly as they passed onward.

Was this peaceful land soon to be upset by the fury of man's anger? Man to be pitted against man, and no one to know where to look for succor? Might not one's own brother betray him for greed, revenge, or mistaken loyalty to Him who looked down in mingled wrath and sorrow upon His people? Would these roads soon be overrun with the hunted and the hunter; with men, women and children fleeing from their own land to any harbor of safety?

If it were to be so, there was no hint of it that day. Peace, smiling peace was everywhere. Hardly a wagon or calèche passed to disturb the lambs frisking by their mothers. The foals roamed

the fields at large, and the cows were quietly chewing their cuds beneath the umbrageous green of the spreading trees.

The calèche went through the slushy roads. The wheels splashed the mud to right and to left. Heavy rains had fallen in this part of the country for some time, as the deep water in the ditches along each side of the road showed.

The horses puffed and blew the breath through their nostrils, for the road was heavy, and they were tired. They were faithful creatures, however, and put forth new efforts as they instinctively felt that their labor for the day was about over. They were right. Suddenly they were whirled about and driven into a small courtyard—a quiet, out-of-the-way place,—and pulled up with a flourish.

Each tired beast gave a glad whinny, as he smelt his oats. Not many minutes would elapse ere Jacques would have them out and into clean stalls, there to rest their weary legs.

This small, many-gabled house with neatly thatched roof was an inn. The fugitives were to stop here, refresh themselves a bit, and change the horses before going further. The innkeeper was well known to *Sieur Dantier* and under some



REPEATED ATTEMPTS AT CUFFING HIM

obligations to him, so could be relied upon to keep quiet in case of pursuit. Jacques had not time to call ere the host came hurrying out of the door. His sabots rang upon the brick walk. His face was full of smiles. The prospect of guests in a slack time was a matter for smiles. Jacques whispered a few words to him, and his face fell. To his credit be it said that he hesitated but for a moment.

He opened the door of the calèche and assisted the tired inmates to alight. He bade them welcome, calling loudly in the next breath, "Guillaume, Guillaume." A very sleepy lad, evidently Guillaume, came round the corner of the inn, rubbing his eyes. On the quiet, Guillaume had been having his forty winks. Repeated attempts at cuffing him over the head on the innkeeper's part, successfully dodged by the boy, seemed to have the desired effect of thoroughly awakening him. He then fell to work with a will, and soon the tired horses were out.

Meanwhile Margot and Babette followed their host into the living-room of the inn, while he filled the air with lamentations about the lad, interspersed with apologies to the ladies. "The lad was a sleepy head; one who could sleep standing up, in fact, everywhere and anywhere. To keep him dodging

about was the only effectual means of successfully arousing him."

After seating his guests, the innkeeper called for his wife and daughter to come. Immediately a fair and plump country lass, ridiculously like her sire, put in an appearance. She helped the travellers off with their wraps, as she chattered incessantly of the "Maman" who was busy with her hands in the cheese so could not come; "Maman" who had so much to do before the morrow. She told them that the house was to be full then with soldiers and gay ladies, a hunting party in fact; and added how nice it would be, for they should see all the fine people. While talking she led the way into a small room, which was the pink of neatness, poured water for them, brushed the dirt from their clothes, and put them quite at ease as she bustled about.

When refreshed, they followed her back into the living room. They were glad to sit and rest while the maiden set the table and prepared a hasty but appetizing meal. While they were eating, she watched them with all a maid's curiosity. Finally it got the better of her politeness, and she began asking them all manner of questions; babbling on like that curling brook which crossed the road

under a little stone bridge, a yard or two from her father's inn-door. How it guggled and sputtered over the stones, telling of pleasant places from whence it came ; asking questions of the lush grass which bent over and kissed it as it passed ! The maiden unmeaningly hurt where she knew it not, and Babette's face was becoming as set as a stone, and Margot was blushing for shame at their secrecy. The innkeeper perceived this and sent the maid out of the room upon an errand. So she was kept busy until Jacques' hunger appeased, and fresh horses put to, he called for them to come.

The innkeeper's daughter was nowhere in sight when they started. They were nearly out of the court when she came running toward them, a mass of flowers in her hands. Jacques pulled up a moment to see what she wanted. She said nothing, but threw into Margot's lap the bouquet of many-hued flowers. Then she waved her hand in farewell, while Jacques cracked his whip and they started on again. Margot called back her thanks, and nodded and smiled at the maid as long as she could see her beside the tree.

“ Was it not dear of her ? See, such lovely flowers ! ”

"Yes, she's a nice girl, but she was eaten up with curiosity."

"But I do not think she meant any harm, dost thou?"

"Perhaps not, but I was afraid of her tongue."

There was silence in the calèche for a few moments when Margot, looking up to ask a question, found that Babette was again nodding. She turned away softly, so as not to awaken her. She shut her own eyes and tried also to sleep. But in a few moments they were wide open and she was again looking out of the window.

They passed few people, Jacques having chosen a road off the thoroughfare as being safer. He was now urging his horses to their utmost speed with the hope of reaching the hut before the night grew too dark. Twilight came on with its long shadows and quaint outlines, and Jacques got down and lighted the lanterns which hung by the sides of the conveyance. He stopped long enough to ask Margot if she were tired and to assure her that they would soon be at their journey's end. When he was back on the box he called lustily to his horses and they went at such a speed, that the calèche rocked from side to side. Babette's head bobbed among the cushions, and finally she awakened.

Conversation was again resumed. Each endeavored to keep the other's courage from failing, for the night had fallen quickly, and it was dark and starless. They spoke in low tones, for they did not want to miss one of the cheery words that Jacques continually called to his horses.

"Oh, but I have had a curious dream," said Babette. "One would think I had eaten too much of the nougat and *fougasses* on a feast day, and it had given me the nightmare. I dreamed that thou and I, dear heart, alone — for I could see the Maman nowhere — were wandering in a beautiful field. Ah, but 't was beautiful! The waving grass bent over like the blade of a sickle, and the flowers glowed like fire-flies, now one color now another. Thou wert walking about with thine eyes shut tight, as if thou wert blind. Every now and then thou wouldst stoop and pluck a flower. As thou didst so the gorgeous blossom fell to pieces and the flower leaves floated about thee, leaving naught in thy hands but a shrivelled stem. Now the wonder of it all was that as soon as the petals touched the ground they turned into most horrible dragons, that hissed and thrust out their fiery tongues at thee. I was mad with fear, but not one touched thee, as ever thou persisted and ever wast disappointed. When I

was crying for very sorrow, there came on a sudden from out the bright sky an angel with shimmering wings and spotless raiment. Just such wings she had as I have seen a gossamer butterfly wear. My old eyes were blinded at the sight. But do not think, dear heart, that to me she came, — old bones were not for her. Thou wast the one. She flew directly to thee. In thine arms she placed a bunch of blooming flowers, all white and of a sweet smell. The dragons became flowers again. The angel smiled and said something. I strained my ears to overhear the words, till I thought my drums would crack, but it was of no avail. With thee it was much different, much different, for thou didst understand every word, and didst nod and nod till she was out of sight. Now, as my eyes overflowed with the happy tears at seeing thee so pleased with the angel's message I awoke, to find I had been weeping; the brine was still upon my eye-winkers."

"That was a queer dream; I suppose these flowers suggested it," said Margot, smelling her posies. "Too bad thou didst not catch the angel's message. How I wish that thou hadst."

"Yes, that is the way with dreams. I always miss the very gist of them."

"Thou couldst not think what the angel might

have said, couldst thou, Babette? ” she asked wistfully.

“ Dear heart, ’tis only prophets in the Bible that can do that, like Joseph, for instance, who foretold Pharaoh’s dream of the fat and lean ears of corn. Thou knowest they always remembered all the dreams in those days, whereas I ’m so stupid I always forget the very best part, either the beginning or the ending — and the dream amounts to nothing. But that was n’t a bad dream as dreams go nowadays, and I will whisper what I think it might mean. It is this: no matter what trouble thou hast, my Margot, however hard to bear, it will have a good ending, — thou wilt get thy flowers at the last, and they will be the very best in the market.” She finished so impressively that Margot smiled at her.

They were now before the hut, and Jacques helped them out and proceeded to make it habitable for the night. A poor place it was, but clean. After seeing them comfortable he left them, intending to change the horses a short distance on and then hasten back to Sieur and Madame, who would be anxious to know if the fugitives had arrived at the hut and were safe.

Chapter VI

MARGOT DANCES THE GAVOT



It was the morning of the second day that they had spent in the hut waiting, waiting. Yesterday had been a day of interminable length, never-ceasing longing, and heart-racking disappointment to the fugitives. It seemed as if to-day might outdo yesterday in dolefulness. The day dawned gray and lowering. Heavy clouds hung low in the west. The sun hid his face and it threatened every moment to rain. All of which did not tend to raise the spirits of either Margot or her nurse.

Margot was sitting out on the door-sill looking down the road which led to Paris. She had awakened early, in spite of the darkness of the morning and had softly rolled out of her hay bed, and tip-toed to the door, so as not to waken Babette. She need not have been so quiet, for Babette slept like a cat with one eye open. She soon followed the child and there on the steps they ate their frugal meal.

The place was a tumble-down shanty on the edge of the road to Havre. They escaped the curiosity of neighbors, for there were none. The only habitation near was a deserted château, standing high upon a hill looming up in the distance against the sky, like a fairy castle. That morning it was hidden by the mist.

The old dame, nervous, and with cause, busied herself here and there and everywhere. She counted over the money in her purse given her by *Sieur Dantier* (although she knew to a centime just how much it contained) and hid the jewel case in every conceivable place about her person. At last she hung it by a hempen rope fastened about her waist, where with every motion she could feel it bumping against her legs. The thief would be clever who could steal it now. In *Babette's* eyes the whole world was full of thieves; she believed every man dishonest till he proved himself to be otherwise.

The old dame had indeed had a great responsibility thrust upon her. She tried to brush from her the thought which would come pounding at her brain that something had happened to her master and mistress. The King! the King! what might he not do with such power? Indeed, the same thought hung heavy as a pall over them both: that

they must start early the next morning for the port of Havre, whether the watched for ones came or not, so as to be in time for Captain Hezekiah Brown, who had set that day for his departure from France.

“Margot, dear heart, thou must come from that door; there may be some more of the King’s soldiers riding by. May fire destroy them! One scare such as I had yesterday is enough in a life time. Oh, to think we should be hiding here like a parcel of thieves!”

Poor old Babette! How little she knew what was before her. Yester evening as Margot and she stood at the door thinking how nice it would be if they might wander to that ruined castle, they saw far off a troop of men on horses. Babette hurried Margot into the old feeding bin which stood at the back of the hut, threw a ragged cloth about her own dress and head, and came back to the front. The men halted at the door, and asked for some water to drink. While they quaffed the sparkling water, taken from the well, they asked her idly enough if she had seen any Huguenots about? They told her that they were out looking for some that were known to be leaving France. Babette immediately thought they meant Margot. She vehemently denied having seen anybody, while mentally asking

the Father to forgive her the lie she told. She rather overdid it, and if the lively fellows had been very much in earnest they would have smelt a mouse.

“Huguenots!” she shrieked in her highest tones, which made Margot quake in her hiding-place; “What should an old woman like me know about Huguenots? ’Tis hard enough to get anything to eat. It’s work, work, work, from morning till night to keep the wolf away from the door. That’s what I do, without worrying about aught else. Huguenots, I’m sick of the very name.”

One of the fellows pulled a small carved image of Our Lady from his breast and told her to kiss it if she were not a Huguenot. Think not Babette made any objections to that! She would have done anything to hasten the jovial fellows on their way. Her old knees were knocking against each other as if she were stricken with the palsy, and her heart-beats sounded to her ears like the tapping of a drum, so that she feared that they might hear them. But in a few moments, laughing, they rode away, leaving the old dame collapsed on the door sill. Ere they were out of sight she remembered Margot, and went and extricated her from her hiding-place.

To-day she was in momentary fear of something

similar happening. But, whenever she glanced at Margot, who sat on the door-sill waiting and watching with a world of longing in her eyes, she found it hard to carry out a plan she had been thinking of all the morning. Another scare! the quick whisking of the child into the hut, to find it was only a belated huckster on his way to market, and she was decided. She went to a corner of the room, and opening a locker took a package from it. The package contained a complete peasant boy's suit of clothes neatly folded. Babette had discovered it when putting away the food which she had brought with her to last until they should be on board ship.

"Margot, dear heart, come here," she called in a rather sharp voice, because her heart was quaking; "see what I have found. Dost not want to put them on? Then thou wilt look even as Louis de la Dantier did in in 1572," she added as she held them up for inspection.

"Louis de la Dantier did not wear peasant's clothes," said Margot, quickly.

"True enough; but he would not have hesitated to have done so in a case like this. And see, they are quite new," and Babette put the clothes up to her long nose and smelt of them, "quite new. One might think they had been left by the good

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Lord himself for thee, and just the right size, too." She held them up to the child to measure them. "Wonderful are the workings of the Lord!"

While Babette was talking, Margot stood fingering the coarse blue wool of the suit with a perplexed look upon her face. Her hands looked lily white against the dark stuff.

"Thou wilt let me put them on?" asked Babette, coaxingly.

"Yes," she replied in a decided voice; "and thou shalt snip off these curls, too — then will the resemblance be even more like."

"I dare not, I dare not," said Babette, her voice trembling; "Madame would never forgive me."

"I will make it right with Maman for thee, Babette. Boys don't wear hair down to their waist, like this."

"Thou art right, but I hate to,— I hate to."

Snip, snip, snap at length went the scissors, and into Babette's lap fell the long strands of hair, which clung lovingly round her fingers. She had only finished half, when two big tears came in her eyes and blinded her. They overflowed and dropped among the golden locks.

"I cannot! I cannot!" she exclaimed, as the scissors fell from her shaking fingers.

"Puff!" said Margot; "give me the scissors, and I will finish it for thee." And taking them, she began to hack at her hair.

"Lord forgive thee, child, what art thou doing?" cried Babette. "Thou wilt ruin it." With the scissors once more in her hand, Babette soon finished her uncompleted task. "There, let me see thee; thou art a nice boy, and I trust a brave one," she added, trying to speak gayly.

"Ah, Babette, though thou hast made me look like a boy, thou canst not put a brave heart in me, even as Louis de la Dantier had," said Margot, and sighed.

"Brave! Come, thou shalt begin to learn to be brave by wearing these," she said with cunning, holding out a pair of wooden sabots, which she had kept hidden until now.

"Those things!" said Margot, with scorn in her voice. "Not I. I like what I have on better."

"Come, they are not so bad; I have worn sabots myself. Many a day when I was a little girl no bigger than thou art, did I trudge miles in them. Why, I took a prize once at a fair, for dancing the gavot in sabots." A light gleamed in the old dame's face at the recollection.

"Oh, didst thou, Babette?" cried Margot eagerly,

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although a smile came upon her lips at the idea of her old nurse dancing, — Babette so staid and prim. “Was it like the dance I learned from Madame Butte? Let me see if I can dance it in sabots.”

Quickly now nimble fingers took off the pretty bottines, and in their place the sabots were put on. Then back and forth in the stately measure of the dance swept the graceful figure. A half smile wreathed her lips at the difficulty she had in keeping on the sabots. But as the measure became faster it was not so hard, for the nimble feet leaped so rapidly they did not have time to slip. Thus interested they forgot everything — time, place, and events were as naught. Babette leaned forward in her chair, her long fingers still fondling the curls in her lap, her eyes eagerly following the child. The wrinkles of perplexity were all smoothed from her brow as she lived again her own dancing days. A smouldering fagot on the hearth threw a bright glow over the child, making her appear in the dingy room (lighted only by one grimy pane) like a living picture. The old nurse beat time with her head, time to the twinkling feet that rat-tated on the bare floor, sending out such a clatter as delighted the ears of the old dame. Now bowing, turning, and pirouetting, every pose of the graceful figure showing to advan-

tage in the boy's attire, whirled Margot like one inspired. At last, when almost breathless, she stopped with a laugh.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried a voice at the window, accompanied by a hearty clapping of hands.

"*Bon Dieu!*" screamed Babette, hastily throwing her apron over the curls in her lap.

She yet had presence of mind enough to grab Margot's dress from where it lay in a little heap on the floor, and sit on it as the quickest way of hiding it, while the stranger came round to the door.

"Be not alarmed at my intrusion," he said, doffing his hat with a flourish and grace that told of Versailles. "I was but coming to ask you for a goblet of water, when, hearing the clatter of the shoon upon the floor, I was tempted to look, and looking became enchanted. Why even old Sol himself could not stay hidden with such provocation to peep," he added with a smile, pointing to a faint beam that meandered across the room. "Truly, the child dances like Terpsichore herself."

Margot stood where she had been erstwhile so gayly dancing, her face going from red to white, and from white to red again. The stranger noticed the confusion on both their faces and perhaps had

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seen more of the late manœuvrings of Babette than she had any idea of, for he said : —

“ I pray you believe that I have neither eyes to see nor ears to hear aught that you wish hidden. I am on my way to the sea.”

“ Oh, art thou ? ” began Margot eagerly, but checked herself as Babette gave a very loud and decided cough, and blushed more deeply than ever.

“ Yes,” Monsieur said, smiling and pretending not to notice the interruption ; “ And now, dame, if you will tell me where I may draw a bucket of water for my horse, I shall be under a thousand obligations to you, the more so that this child has chased the clouds from the sun’s face, and I am sure that he will stay out lest he miss a repetition of what he but caught a glimpse.”

Now Babette was in a very embarrassing position, for if she arose from the chair, her secret would be out, yet she wished to oblige the handsome stranger. Margot saw the predicament she was in and hastened to say : —

“ I will show thee. ’T is not far, only around at the back of the house, where the ground slopes so suddenly as to almost hide it.”

Monsieur picked up a bucket, which he saw

standing on a bench near the door, and together they set off down the beaten path now flecked with sunshine. But their backs were hardly turned ere Babette was after them. She was afraid lest the stranger would draw some remarks from Margot relative to their position. But Monsieur was discretion itself, talking only of his own affairs—of his horse, a beautiful creature that followed him like a dog, and of his journey. It was not long before he bade them good bye to the great relief of Babette and sorrow of Margot. Margot did not see how this delightful man could do them any harm. Babette was fearful of the arrival of Sieur and Madame Dantier, who might be known to the stranger. They watched him ride off upon his horse until a curve in the road hid him from sight. Then Margot resumed her seat on the door sill, while her nurse tied up the curls with a blue ribbon and put them away in one of her numerous pockets to keep for Madame.

More than one crowd of the King's soldiers passed, but they simply glanced at the child and rode on. Babette smiled a queer smile and thanked God for the peasant's clothes found in the hut. Every calèche, wagon, or person as it came in sight (even before Margot could distinguish what

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it was) caused her heart to beat almost to bursting. As they came nearer and she saw that they were not the expected ones it would seem to sink down into the little wooden sabots, there to stay heavy as lead until the appearance of the next object, when hope would again shine in the big brown eyes. And so the day passed.

Chapter VII

THE TOKEN OF GRATITUDE



WHEN the stars were shining brightly in the sky Margot knelt down by Babette's side, and repeated the short prayers she had always said at her mother's knee. Then she prayed that God would bring her mother and father safe to her, and help the King to do no wrong. Afterwards, as she was undressing, handling rather dubiously the boy's clothes, she said to Babette:—

“Hast thought what the boy will do when he finds his clothes gone?”

“Indeed I have n't, dear heart, unless 't is that he will have to do without them.”

“Dost think 't is an honest way of doing?”

“Honest!” exclaimed Babette; “we are but taking what nobody seems to care for. The good Lord will forgive us, since there is naught else to do.”

“But, Babette, that will not help the boy any. I know what I shall do — dost remember the louis

d'or piece that father gave me? I shall leave it for him."

"Thou wilt leave it for thieves to get, then," said the old dame decidedly. "'T is my opinion that this house has been vacant a long time. What poor woman would leave a good suit like that? No, no, more like it was dropped from heaven for thee and believing so we shall take it and be grateful."

"Nevertheless I shall leave the money. How dost know but some poor boy on his way to sea, dropped in here to spend the night and the next day started on his journey forgetful of his package? Should he come back he will not come for naught; he will find the money that shall buy him a new suit."

"Of course 't is thine own —" Babette said, with a shrug and a wave of the hand that expressed as plainly as words that she knew what would become of the louis-d'or.

"Babette, may I have one of my curls?"

"Yes," grudgingly said Babette; "what art going to do with it?"

"I will tell thee," she said, taking the curl from Babette.

"I am going to make a little nest for the money, and the boy will know that I wanted to give him

something beside gold for his kindness in leaving his things."

"Gold enough I'm thinking," mumbled the old dame, looking at the golden curl and the golden coin. "But thou dost forget that the boy did not leave the clothes for thee."

"What difference does it make, Babette, since we have taken them. It will not hurt him to know that we are grateful."

"What ideas thou hast, child; but do as thou wishest."

Thoughts, golden as the curl and coin, were in Margot's heart as she walked across the room to the locker, and put down into its depths the price of the clothes and the token of gratitude.

"Babette, dost think I shall ever see my parents again?" said Margot, presently, as she sat on the side of the sweet smelling hay bed. Tears, big, silent tears, splashed down on her night robe. "I fear me, I fear me."

"Of course thou wilt, dear heart," said Babette, who had not known before that she was weeping, "but it will be in the good Lord's own time, and thou must not be rebellious."

"I will not I will not. Only I do so wish for my mother."

“ They may be waiting at the ship for us. So go to sleep now like a good one, for we must be up at cock’s crow.”

Margot tried obediently to do as she was asked. and Babette waited until she thought she was asleep. Then down on her old rheumatic knees she floundered, and began to pray in so violent a fashion, with such moanings, and claspings of hands, and shakings of her head as to leave one in doubt whether she was supplicating or complaining to the Lord. Evidently she found hope, help and encouragement from her prayer, for she rose from her knees refreshed in spirit, and so girded up her loins for all coming difficulties.

She took her chair and placed it beside the bed upon which Margot was sleeping. There she made herself as comfortable as possible and dozed off for a few hours. In the early morning ere the stars had faded she arose and made all ready, and it was not long before they were walking toward Havre.

Chapter VIII

THE WAY OF CAPTAIN HEZEKIAH BROWN



It was at first a pleasant experience to Margot, who had never been out at such an unseemly hour, but had nestled in her own bed, safe under her father's roof. A few stars still glimmered here and there in the high gray sky. They began to disappear one by one. The gray became paler and took on in places a faint pink tint. And what was that in the east? A delicate opalescent glow like the inside of a seashell. It deepened into crimson and then the sun, big and round, appeared, the herald of a glorious day. Flowers dotted the roadside. They looked lovely in the soft light of the early morn. In truth they were faded, even dusty from the roadway. Margot wished to stop long enough to make a little nosegay of some to take the place of those left in the hut, although the flowers of the late summer never seemed quite so dear to her as those of the early spring. But Babette heeded her not, for she strode stolidly onward,

pondering deeply on the mysterious ways of Providence, the sending of an old woman, French to the backbone, to a foreign country. She loved every stick and stone of her own beautiful France; every blade of grass that grew about the door; every cricket that sang about the hearth. Never could any other place, however lovely, wean that faithful heart from her native land. She half muttered to herself that she was a fool to act so impulsively — at her time of life too — as to leave her home. She glanced at Margot. *Peste!* what else was there for her to do? Could she let the child go alone to a land peopled with yelping Indians, wild animals, and the Lord only knows what else?

“My goodness, dear heart, thou hast a most woe-begone look upon thy face. What is it?”

“These sabots have worn holes in my feet, Babette, I do believe,” she answered solemnly.

“Canst stand it for a short time? It seems to me that we are on the fringe of Havre. I smell the sea and the smoke from the chimneys.”

The keenness of that long nose of Babette's had not deceived her. They both gave vent to a sigh of relief as they entered the straggling streets of the port. Here and there a lanthorn hung from a rickety post; its candle still burning and casting

forth a feeble light. Only a few people were up. An occasional dog or cat ran past them, otherwise all was quiet.

"There," said Babette, "that must be the ship; 'tis the only large one in dock.

"Yes. It is the 'Willing Bark.' We are here at last. I hope we'll have no trouble in finding the captain."

"Dost think that is he?" asked Margot, pointing to a short, stout man, who was strutting up and down the deck, giving his orders in a swaggering manner to a few New England sailors. They were busy getting the sails up and the deck in order preparatory to starting.

As soon as the quick eyes of Captain Hezekiah caught sight of the Frenchwoman, over-burdened as regards her clothes, and leading a young lad, who hung back in a diffident way, he called out:—

"Ah, there you are; I was afraid I'd have to leave without you. Is this the little boy, ahem! who is running away from France, and wants to try his hand in a new world? Well, we want new blood there sure enough, and a few hardships will make those cheeks as hard as apples, and as rosy. But I thought I was to have a little lady passenger,

how is that?" This last was asked in a low voice, but he spoke in a droll way, with many winks and gesticulations, and while he used very bad French, it was easily enough understood.

Margot's face was now rosy red, enough so to please even Captain Hezekiah; but it was red from shame, — why had Babette made her wear those horrid clothes? She said, however, with a dignity which was all her own, —

"I am Margot Dantier. You are our friend, so I may tell you that Babette, my nurse, thought it best that I put on these boys' garments. I like them not, though one steps well in them."

The captain gave a loud guffaw at her words and pinched her cheek, and tapped her head in a rough way that yet had no harm in it.

Babette now began to ask for Sieur and Madame Dantier in a quick, excited manner. She put a dozen questions, it seemed, without stopping to breathe. Captain Hezekiah Brown stood with his hands stuck in his pockets staring quizzically at her. He was a product of that new country whither they were going. His face was the color of mahogany, and seamed with wrinkles. Two white scars crossed it, one on the forehead, and the other on the cheek. These white lines gave him a grim and

fierce look. He was clad in a blue serge jacket and breeches tied about the middle with a soft, red, silken scarf, from which hung a seaman's hanger. He wore red knitted stockings, stout, square-toed shoes with silver buckles, and on his head, jauntily hung over one ear, a three-cornered hat.

"Well, I'll be jiggered, dame," he said, when Babette had to stop for lack of wind. "Do you think I'm a Frenchie that you clang your clapper so? Go slower." The conversation was carried on in loud tones now that they were on deck, as people are apt to do, thinking that by speaking loudly they are the easier understood.

"Yes, yes, yes. I understand you. *Sieur Dan-tier* is detained, and he and his wife will follow by the next ship they can get. You are to go as far as New Amsterdam with me. Their boxes you'll find stowed on board. Wait, here's a letter telling you all about it. I most forgot to give it to you. Now you had best hide yourself and the little one down in the cabin, for some of his Majesty's soldiers might come spying over the ship to see if I have contraband articles aboard." He spoke with authority, then added, as if all the drollery would not down, as he gave a wink at Margot and a tap on her cheek, "But I think Captain Hezekiah Brown

can hold his own. Come, then." And he led the way, followed by the fugitives.

"There, make everything ship-shape, for we will be off in a jiffy. 'Tis a snug little cage for a lady bird." With these words he left them after locking the door.

"*Peste!* Have we come to a den of thieves to be locked in so!" exclaimed Babette. She was anxious, however, to read her note, so she made no more comments, but sat herself down on the edge of the bunk and began laboriously to decipher it. The note, it was no more, stated that the Sieur and Madame Dantier had been detained and would follow as soon as possible. She was to go on, and as God was her judge protect Margot from every possible danger, until such time as she could place her safe and unharmed in her mother's arms.

Margot went about the little room from one thing to another, looking first at the bunks where they were to sleep and then at the port-hole which was their only window. Presently she heard the creaking of the ropes, the flapping of the sails, and knew by the increased rocking of the ship that they were off. Like a flood the thought overwhelmed her that they were bound for a foreign shore without her dear parents. She saw that Babette realized it too.

"Babette! Babette! Babette!" she cried, "what shall we do without them?"

"*Ma petite*, we can only trust in God's goodness to the end," the broken old woman answered as she took her to her breast and tried to soothe and comfort the tired and troubled child.

It seemed hours before the door was opened, and Captain Hezekiah Brown stood before them.

"I guess no one can get the little lady now; and, Dame, you might as well put on her own rigging, unless we prefer what we have on as being easier to walk in." Here he gave a sly wink at Margot. "We are out of sight of the French land and Hezekiah Brown is master of his own ship, and he gives you the run of it till we reach port. Cheer up, cheer up, and come up on deck who knows what you'll find there."

Margot had arisen when he opened the door but only shook her head as she looked at him in a sad way. As there was nothing else for him to do, the captain left them, after looking at the child for a moment, and scratching his head in a puzzled sort of way.

Chapter IX

TO THE RESCUE



HE "Willing Bark" was a trading vessel, and carried immigrants, redemptioners, and political prisoners, all going out to the Colonies. They were an unruly lot, and from down in the hold there would often come sounds of wild mirth, rough jesting, and frequent swearing. Captain Hezekiah Brown used strenuous measures to keep it quiet below, not only for the little lady's sake (his only passenger), but for the order of things. He was a severe taskmaster, and more than one man, convicts mostly, ended their voyage in chains.

The captain was very fond of his little lady passenger, not only because she had paid her way in gold, although gold was what Captain Hezekiah Brown was working for, but also on account of her beauty and gentle ways.

They had been many days at sea now, and Margot was dressed in her own proper habiliment. She stood on the deck looking at the spray comb-

ing itself against the side of the ship. Her time was spent thus and in watching the staid New Englanders at their work. She was left much to herself, for Babette was indeed a poor sailor. She spent her time in the snug cabin, praying every time the vessel gave a lurch; indeed there were grave doubts in her mind as to their ever reaching their journey's end.

The captain passed Margot on his watch, and when he saw the far-away look in her eyes he offered her his spy-glass. He was in the habit of extending this courtesy to her whenever he knew not what else to do. At such times he would scratch his head in perplexity, not being used to children and children's ways. He felt sorry for the child bereft of both parents for the present and mayhap for all time. No one knew better than he, sailing between the two worlds as he constantly did, that those were perilous times. He was not always happy, however, in his manner of expressing his sympathy to the child, being but a rough seaman.

"Here, little lady, look through this, and tell me if you see any thing out yonder," he said. This was the usual remark he made when handing her his glass. She took it in a patient way. She really did not care to look through it and, as always, see

nothing, nothing but the blue sea rolling on in its calm way. To-day she was rewarded for her politeness, and a surprised look came into her face.

"Yes, I do see something," she cried, a quiver of excitement in her voice. "It looks black, mayhap 't is a man." Now she shuddered.

"More like a whale swimming," he answered, rather surprised himself, for it had been merely a subterfuge on his part to divert her. He took the glass from her and looked through it.

"I see. It is something, but as yet I can't make out what. See if you can." And he handed the glass back to her.

"Yes, I can," she said; "it is a dog swimming. How can he have gotten into the water? There are no ships in sight. Oh, *petit bon Dieu!* do not let him drown," she cried with a sob.

"By the Lord Harry, we'll have to send him help, he must have fallen overboard from a vessel. Here, you fellows, slacken the ropes," the captain shouted his orders to his sailors for the bringing about of the ship and sent them hurrying about the deck. "I'm afraid he'll be done up before we can reach him."

They had now come near enough the object of interest, to see the dog's face distinctly. His eyes, eyes of infinite sadness, were raised to the ship's

deck, with an expression of mute appeal. He was too exhausted to climb on to the plank which had been dropped near him. One, two, and three attempts he made and then gave it up. Now the spectators watched him in breathless silence. Again he made another attempt, and this time he managed to get his fore paws upon it but it looked as if each succeeding wave would wash them off, so feeble was his hold.

“Oh, Captain Brown, do not let him drown. Do not let him drown!” cried Margot, her voice trembling with excitement. “See how hard he is fighting for his life.”

The sailors were all gathered at the bow of the boat, except the man at the wheel who could not leave his post. One of them, a good-natured fellow who perhaps had a natural fondness for animals, climbed down the ship's ladder before the captain had time to give the command. He was soon astride of the plank. After many tumbles into the water, and much cheering and jeering from the crew, which he submitted good-naturedly to, by dint of hauling and coaxing, and pushing, he succeeded in getting the dog upon it, where to all seeming he lay dead.

“The poor fellow!” called the sailor to them,

"he's food for Davy's locker. He's been a fine fellow in his day. A St. Bernard, I guess."

"Oh, dost think he is really dead?" called Margot to the sailor. "Please do not leave him there any way; he might not be dead, thou knowest."

"Well, boys," said the captain, with a laugh and a twinkle in his eye, "you hear what the little lady says; so out with the life boat and rescue the perishing. It would n't be just the thing not to give him a show after making such a fight for his life, and dropping the Lord knows where from."

Before he had finished speaking, the men were busy, and soon the boat was lowered. Splash, it floundered in the spray, and Margot uttered a distressed cry, for now neither men, dog, nor boat, was to be seen for a moment, but only for a moment, when back to the surface they floated again.

"Careful, boys, careful. Haul him up and let us have a look at him. By Jove, he's as thin as a cod in spawning time; been living on himself for some time, I'll be bound."

Margot raised her grateful eyes to the captain as the sailors brought the dog and laid him at her feet. It required the assistance of two of them as he was a large, fine fellow, although now naught but skin and bones.

"*Ce bon chien !* Thou art not dead, truly thou art not," murmured she to the apparently dying beast. "See, he opens his eyes, and he breathes. 'Tis starved he is. Dost think I might ask the cook for some broth ? He can have mine." And Margot appealed to the captain.

"Here you, Doggett," called the captain to one of the sailors, "see what the cook can give you and say 'tis the little lady that wants it."

"I thank you. He tries to lick my hand, poor dumb beast. What beautiful brown eyes he has, so soft and sad. 'Tis glad thou art to be safe out of that vast devouring sea."

"If he ever amounts to anything, 'tis to a little French lady he owes it, and she may have him if she wishes," said the captain.

"Is it to me you mean to give this beautiful dog?" asked Margot of the captain, with wonderment in her eyes. When he bent his head in repeated nods she added: "Truly you are good, I shall love him very much."

Here Doggett, pleased evidently with his persuasive powers, having obtained the soup, came up, and with a grin said:—

"It is not every one who has a friend in the cook. He was like one of Mother Carey's chickens before



"I SHALL HAVE TO FEED HIM"

the storm, when I asked for the broth; he changed his tune when I said it was for her." Here he pointed a knotty finger at Margot.

"How kind of him to give it to me," Margot murmured, as she took the broth from the sailor, thanking him. "What shall I do! what shall I do! He won't eat," she said, distressed at the dog's inability to eat the food. "I shall have to feed him." And so she did, pouring spoonful after spoonful down his throat. Soon he sat up on his haunches and began to feed himself. Then he began ravenously to eat of the black bread, which Margot had broken into bits. He must have been days without food.

"There, 't is enough," said the captain, as Margot looked inquiringly into the bowl and up into his face, wondering whether she might ask for more or not. "It is best to be careful at first not to over-feed him. After a while we'll try and put some fat on his bones."

The good dog got up, and licked Margot's hand in a grateful way. He stretched himself and gave a deep open-mouthed yawn. Then, with a sigh, he dropped at her feet and went to sleep. There was no doubt in his canine mind as to whom he belonged. His mistress sat silently beside him, nor budged for fear of waking him. Even at the sound-

ing of the five bells for meal-time she hated to leave him. The captain chuckled. "The little lady has something to occupy her now, and 'tis time, 'tis time."

The dog slept for twenty-four hours, and only wakened once for food. Nature effected a perfect cure. He was a handsome fellow and soon became almost as much a favorite as Margot herself. He was devoted to his mistress, never willingly leaving her side.

The next thing of importance, so it seemed to Margot, was to find out the dog's name. She tried all the names in her vocabulary, and then she gave it up.

"No, no, doggie, thou canst not own them all; mayhap thou didst not have a name. Thou certainly art not a French dog. Come, let us to the captain, and ask him to help us. 'Tis a good lucky name he shall give thee." So saying Margot arose and, with the dog at her heels, went to find the captain. The dog kept wagging his tail as much as to say: "Yes, that will be best, for I can neither tell you my name, nor how I came to be in that cruel water. Too bad, too bad! If I only could; it would make your eyes open wider than they are now, my mistress."

"Can you think of a name for my dog, Captain Brown? He does not answer to any of the names I know, or rather he answers to them all, for he wags his tail at all of them."

"Well, well, I shall have to put on my thinking cap," he replied, his face drawn up in its peculiar manner, and Margot was in doubt whether he was serious or going to crack one of his many jokes.

"What is the matter with Neptune?" he said, after a moment's hesitation. "It was old father Neptune gave him to you, so why not flatter the old fellow by naming the dog after him?"

Margot thought there was nothing the matter with Neptune, and so the dog was called. The captain in a spirit of drollery thought they ought to have a christening party. So they brought a bottle of water and Margot, letting a few drops fall on the dog's head, said, with great seriousness, "I christen thee Neptune." The sailors enjoyed it immensely, for they welcomed any sport on a voyage usually full of hardships. Neptune looked very dubious about it, and Margot thought that for a time he had had about enough of water.

So they sailed, and sailed with Neptune to vary the sameness of the days. He was a source of joy and comfort to Margot, who whispered things into



his ears that she would not tell her nurse, for fear she might think her rebellious.

He grew to be another dog, he became so fat and sleek. His mistress often wondered if he had left any friends in peril, or had any one whom he longed for. He seemed to have no regrets and was just happy, trying to bring his mistress into the same state of mind.

Chapter X

NEW AMSTERDAM AND MONSIEUR DÉSIRÉ D'ALBERT



HE day broke heavy with mist. Margot, out on deck, could distinguish nothing. She was not a little disappointed, for this was the morn when they were to sight the fortifications of New Amsterdam. The sturdy little craft, cutting its way through the mist, sailed down the narrows. On a sudden the sun thrust forth his fiery beams, pushed through the mist and rendered it as nothing. There before them lay the small town.

“Oh!” cried Margot. “Is it not a strange land, just like the country, so many trees,—a forest indeed; and what queer houses.”

It was not strange that she thought it a queer land, accustomed as she was to the fine buildings and palaces of France, or that Babette turned a disdainful lip; there was only one large brick

house then in New Amsterdam, the home of a former Dutch governor, Peter Stuyvesant.

When the ship came nearer, they saw that the streets were narrow and crooked, mere by-paths sometimes. No cobbled roads crossed the face of the country. The houses, being of wood, had gable ends of small black and yellow bricks, brought over from Holland. The roofs were very steep, and extended over the front of the houses, where they made a covering for the stoop in front of the door. Here the neighbors congregated of a summer's evening to chat. In rainy weather it was not so convenient for people passing in the street, as the water from the roofs descended in torrents on the unwary passer-by's head. In the back of the houses there was the inevitable lean-to.

The houses were built facing the south, so that the sun at noon would fall square upon the floor and tell it was mid-day. The casements containing many panes swung out on hinges, and the date was in iron figures on some of them.

Now, although Babette had turned a contemptuous eye at sight of the little straggling hamlet set on the water's edge, still she was quite anxious to leave the "Willing Bark" that had brought them so many miles in safety. She had vowed many times

during the trip that only let her get the sole of her foot on dry land, and never should she step aboard a vessel again.

While the captain gave orders to the sailors about the bringing in of his ship, he kept his eyes open for some one in the crowd, which had gathered, as it always did, upon the coming in of a vessel from the Old World. He was looking for some one to whom he could intrust his passengers; some one to take them to Vrouw Jans, who he knew could take care of them for the present. His eyes lighted upon a tall, handsome man dressed in the regular trappings and leather leggings of a French Coureur de Bois. He came walking with a swinging tread, and joined the crowd about the wharf.

"Halloo there, Monsieur Désiré d'Albert," the captain sang out; "come aboard for a moment, will you?"

"Certainly," Monsieur replied, making his way through the crowd. When he reached the captain he said, after shaking hands: "Are you not a day overdue? I looked for you yesterday."

"Not a bit of it, not a bit of it."

"At any rate, we beat you in," pointing to the "Sally Lunn" lying in dock. "Came in day before yesterday."

"You did, did you? You mean to tell me you crossed in that rotten hulk when the 'Willing Bark' lay at Havre?"

"I had to, my friend. King Louis and I had a little difference, and it was best I give him time in which to cool off before he sees me again. I did not care to bring you into disfavor, but had I known of the treasure your old ship contained, I should have braved everything." And Monsieur Désiré d'Albert looked at Margot, standing with a pleased and surprised look on her face.

"The little lady, ah! ah!" the captain said, with a smile. "'T was about her I wanted to speak with you. Let me introduce you — she's a country woman of your own — Mademoiselle Margot Dantier, a Huguenot fugitive from Paris, and this is her nurse Babette."

Désiré d'Albert took off his hat with a great flourish, then kissed her hand in gallant French fashion.

"How do you do, Little Majesty Two-shoes? I bid you welcome to a new land, and I trust a more indulgent one. And you Madame also," turning to Babette with another courtly bow.

"It is Monsieur who stopped at the hut near Havre for a drink, is it not?" asked Margot, ex-

citement shining in her eyes. "How strange to meet him here."

"Strange, yet not so strange as the miracle Désiré d'Albert witnessed, — the scattering of the clouds by the dancing of a young lad."

Then Désiré d'Albert walked off with the captain, who told him in a low voice about Margot, and how she happened to come over with him. He concluded by saying: "As for her father, I'm afraid he's rather too valuable a man to let go out of the kingdom of France, and is kept a prisoner there. It is too bad. She's a little darling, too sweet for this rough country."

Now the captain became fidgetty, knowing his men were waiting for orders, and his cargo was to be unloaded.

"Say, can I leave them in your charge?" he said, abruptly, with a jerk of his thumb in the direction where Margot and her nurse waited. "Will you see them settled at Vrouw Jans?"

"I know a better place than that, — I shall take them to Vrouw Van der Hoef's — some very good friends of mine, who will take them in, I know."

"The very place," said the captain, who now bade farewell to his passengers, almost crushing Margot's small hands in his big brown ones. There

was a droll expression on his grim face as he told her he would not soon forget his little lady, and would come and see her whenever he could find time. Then he strode off and was giving his orders to right and to left ere they had left the ship.

The crowd made way for them at a careless word or push from Désiré d'Albert, but followed them with gaping mouths, and eyes bursting with curiosity to take in the strangers. Babette held her head erect and Margot fast by the hand. Her eyes were like stones in their despair; no curiosity dwelt there, only deep disappointment. Was this the land they had travelled so many miles to reach? "*Bon Dieu*, help us!" I can hear her say. Margot looked with pleased surprise at the children playing in the streets, dressed so differently from the little ones at home. Neptune, wildly glad to be on land again, ran on ahead, rolling from side to side, as sailors do after many days at sea. Women came to their doors and stared at them. It was a rare thing for any one to come into the town so beautifully dressed as the young French child. When they noticed, which was very soon I assure you, her dainty red slippers with their golden buckles, they shook their heads dubiously.

Monsieur Désiré d'Albert, from the numerous

greetings he received, showed he was a person well known in New York. More dames than one beckoned to him, intending to have him satisfy their curiosity, but he only shook his head as he passed on.

"You have a fine dog there," said Monsieur. "Did you bring him from France? I do not remember to have seen him at D'oën."

"No, Monsieur," Margot answered; "Captain Brown gave him to me. He came to us out of the sea, almost dead. A strange thing, was it not?" Then she told him about the finding of the dog, and how next day they had passed the wreck of a sloop. The captain had thought that the dog might have come from it; perhaps the sailors had pushed him off as being one too many to feed when they had abandoned the boat.

"He is quick enough now," he said, with a smile, as Neptune ran ahead of them and scattered some ducks that were waddling in a puddle. The ducks set up a most woeful quacking, one impudent drake even venturing to hiss boldly at them.

They went down one narrow street and up another, while Margot prattled on and on to her new friend. She thought him a brave man; was he not from her own country? She opened her very heart to him; told him how unhappy she was

about the dear parents, and how she feared she might never see them again. She had not dreamed that she could do such a thing a few moments before, for she was a reserved child, who had made few confidences in her short life, except to those very near to her. Perhaps it was the great but quiet sympathy she read in Désiré d'Albert's face that compelled her to tell him all she hoped and feared. Perhaps she felt (intuition is born in some) that here was a man indeed,—a man who would accomplish whatever he undertook, a friend to rejoice in.

“*Mon Dieu!* Protect us!” cried Babette, as she grabbed Monsieur by the arm and clung to him as an Indian approached. It was the first time she had been so near an Indian, and she was frightened out of her stoical indifference. Later, as the rest of the townspeople, she came to regard them with indifference, even with contempt for their impotency. And she wished she had not, how she wished she had not!

“He is an Indian,” said Monsieur; “they are as plentiful as huckleberries in August hereabouts. You will soon get used to seeing them.”

The man saluted Monsieur, who called him by name Meshinauwa, and spoke pleasantly to him.

Now having reached the house of Mynheer Van der Hoef, Monsieur knocked with the brazen knocker, and, upon the immediate answer "Come in," pushed open the door, and they entered.

"How do you do, Vrouw Van der Hoef?" he said to a woman who was seated at her wheel, shaking hands with her. "I bring you guests."

"Why, Mynheer — you? Where did you come from? I am glad to see both you and your friends." And good housewife Vrouw Van der Hoef, noted among the huys-vrouws of New Netherlands as being the most thrifty, made them welcome. She shook Babette by the hand, but drew Margot to her ample bosom and kissed her. Then she asked all about them, and Monsieur, with many shrugs of his broad shoulders, proceeded to tell all he had learned from the captain.

She listened intently. Here was news — something to tell her neighbors over the knitting and the spinning, and to conjecture whether the parents would ever reach New Amsterdam in safety. Again she took Margot into her arms, as she said: —

"Too bad! too bad! Thank God there is room enough for all in this country. I shall keep them willingly till they can hear from their kinsfolk. Ah, here comes Mynheer to add his welcome to mine."

Mynheer Van der Hoef was a sturdy, fat Hollander, and he put them at ease with a hearty laugh.

"There is enough for all. The attic is full and the cellar ready to burst with plenty," he said.

"Now, my Little Majesty Two-shoes, that you are settled, I must be off," said Monsieur to Margot. "I think I shall go from here to Maryland, and I shall endeavor to find out all I can of your relatives there, and apprise them of your arrival. So it will not be long before you will hear from them. Ere you see me again many months may have passed, as I shall go North by way of the Lakes. Be assured that when in Canada I shall look out for some one of my friends going home to the Mother Country, and by them I shall send and find out whether Maman has started yet, for any help that Désiré d'Albert can give them they are welcome to, for the sake of *les beaux yeux* of their daughter."

From this you will see that Margot had found a friend in Monsieur Désiré d'Albert, and her heart was beating with wild delight.

"Oh, wilt thou, Monsieur, wilt thou indeed?" she cried. Then added solemnly, "I shall love thee, and pray for thee until thou comest again."

"Thank you; Désiré d'Albert needs both. No,

no, my good Vrouw, do not tempt me ; I am due at the Governor's," he replied, in answer to Vrouw Van der Hoef's urgent invitation to stay with them to dinner. "I bid you *au revoir*." With a kiss on Margot's hand and a sweeping bow to all, he was gone.

"He is a brave man," said the Vrouw, as she stood with Margot at the door watching Monsieur out of sight ; "the most intrepid traveller. He goes way into the heart of the land, and explores rivers and places entirely unknown. Even the Indians are friendly to him. He is a favorite with all."

Margot and Babette did not understand all of what she was saying, but they knew that she was extolling their new friend by her tone and a word understood here and there, and they quite agreed with her.

Babette thought every one spoke a different tongue in this queer country, and she was not so very wrong, as there were at that time eighteen different languages spoken in New Amsterdam. She was able, however, to assist the Vrouw with the dinner when she came to laying the white cloth, and good help she was, too.

Meanwhile Margot had gone to the other side of the room, where, in a deep hooded cradle of birch bark, lay the most wonderful Dutch baby a little

French girl had ever seen; a young American, and the only heir of the house of Van der Hoef.

She and Neptune stood and watched it. Its rosy cheeks were shining like red apples, so round and hard, from out its snowy swathing clothes. It looked extremely like the big wax doll Margot had left at home. Suddenly, without warning, it opened its large blue eyes and then smiled at her, while it billed and cooed. Margot's heart was completely won. Neptune sniffed the cradle disdainfully, not knowing whether to be jealous of the helpless thing that lay in it or not.

Chapter XI

A COZY KITCHEN



ROUW VAN DER HOEF was a fair Hollander, who wore her hair plastered to each side of her head. Her daily attire was a voluminous blue gown, short enough to show the bright red knitted stockings, and stout but serviceable low shoes with their silver buckles. She always wore a well-starched muslin cap, except on Sundays, when it was replaced by an ample silken hood before going to meeting. She arose at the crowing of the cocks, and her milking was over ere the town herder came with his horn calling for her brown-eyed Bess and dappled Sally, to take them with the other cattle she had collected to the common feeding place. She was strong and hearty from wholesome food and good cheer, and bore the reputation of making the most delicious clekeoks in the whole Dutch colony. She never sat down except to her knitting or spinning, after the housework was done, or to tend to the

needs of little baby Jan, who was good. He spent most of his time sleeping, as a little Dutch baby with a busy mother should.

The good woman was quite ready at the sounding of the curfew from the church-bell to get into bed, after covering the smouldering red brands of fire over with ashes. All through the long night the rattle-watch, with his ironbound hour-glass lanthorn and rattle, paced up and down the streets and by-paths. He shook his rattle at every door and called the hour, and stated the weather as "Three o'clock and a fine frosty night."

How primitive it was in this colony of New Netherlands, or New York, as it was now called.

The kitchen was the living-room in this home, as in most of the colonists' houses. What a comfortable kitchen it was, occupying with its great length and breadth almost all the lower part of the house, only a small part being reserved for an out-kitchen. It seemed as though some genie might have conveyed it bodily from Holland. It had an immense open fireplace, with a kettle hanging on the crane. At its side stood a Dutch oven, where all the cooking was done, and at such times sent out appetizing smells indeed, which made little hungry mouths water.

The candlesticks and snuffers and other silver, used only upon state occasions, were kept on the high shelf over the fireplace. The hanging shelves at the side of the room held the red Portuguese ware, pewter plates, also the silver used daily, as the bite-and-stir sugar boxes, and sugar sifter. Near by was a spoon rack for holding the spoons.

The floor was freshly scrubbed and sanded over every day. The broom, wielded by the skilful hands of Vrouw Van der Hoef, marked it into little squares and triangles, and upon occasions even into roses, in the most intricate way. But it was not long before they were obliterated by the many feet that trod to and fro, and Babette thought it a waste of time. Up stairs in the tiny spare room where Margot slept they stayed longer, for the child used to go in paths about her room, to the bed, to the chest of drawers, and to the door, so as not to mark out the pretty figures.

Margot loved the kitchen best of all. By the big open fire, she had her place on the settle, with Neptune at her feet on a rug. There little baby Jan had his cradle, and often she would rock him to sleep in it. Sometimes the good huys-vrouw would lay him in her lap. What bliss to sit then before the flaming fire, and, with his skirts pulled up, warm

his fat pink toes. Songs of her own baby days would come to her lips—a *chanson* of love and chivalry it might be. Then the low-roofed room would echo to martial strains, or perhaps she would sing in her lisping way the nursery rhyme of the Hollanders caught from the lips of Vrouw Van der Hoef.

“Trip a troup a troujes
De vaarken in de boonjes,
De koejes in de klaver,
De kaarden in de haver,
De kalder in de lang gras,
De eenjes in de water plas,
So groot myn klein poppetje was.”

Hearing her, the two women would glance at each other and smile, thinking “now at least she is happy and forgets.”

They had been in this new country more than a month, and as yet they had not received any word from the Dantier family living in Maryland. Babette, not wishing to trust entirely in Monsieur d’Albert, had sent a message to them by a pioneer, but whether it had ever reached them or not was not known. Direful tales were brought by a friendly Indian of Indian uprisings and massacres of the settlers throughout Maryland. It was doubtful whether their messenger ever got to his destination. And

the old nurse was advised to stay with her charge where she was for the present, until a party could be found that was going her way.

The autumn days were passing away, as days will do, whether passed in enjoyment or in longing and anxiety. Babette busied herself in helping the huys-vrouw and with her prayers. Margot would often be seen with a group of children about her as she sat on the stoop in mild weather. She told them many a French fairy story in their own Dutch language, although brokenly. Great was the merriment and many the interruptions, as each and every one tried to assist her whenever at a loss for a word to express her meaning, all of which helped her vastly in learning their language. But it was not always so. At first the little lads and lasses of America did not understand Margot, reared as she had been amidst beautiful surroundings, in the very lap of luxury. They themselves had had many a hardship to endure. So they scoffed and mimicked her, called her Little Majesty Two-shoes, in imitation of Monsieur d'Albert's gallant manner. By degrees she won them over, and now they were her warmest partisans. The name Little Majesty Two-shoes, however, clung to her, and among them all she was known by it quite as much as by Margot.

She never cared to join in their sports, but would always look on and smile and nod to them whenever they appealed to her. It was her task to act as peacemaker in the many disputes between the rough and tumble children.

There were times when the child wanted to be alone, when she felt that her life was different from the happy, careless existence of the other children. Then she would wander through the town, her face pathetic in its sadness. She would go down to where the ships landed, for never did a ship cast its anchor but she would find out whether any of its passengers were from France, and if they knew aught of her parents. Ever disappointed, for there were few who came from France that landed at that port, yet she persevered. If an Indian from some one of the friendly tribes near Canada came into New Amsterdam she would seek him out and inquire of him. She became a well-known person, not only among the Dutch and English settlers of the town, but also in the tents of the friendly Indians near by. Sometimes she would stop, and, sitting on the grass in front of a wigwam, chat with the squaws about their papposes, or watch them string clams on the long, slender willow twigs to dry for use in the winter time. Sometimes she would gather the

sweet bayberries into a willow basket, given her by a squaw, and take them to Vrouw Van der Hoef, who made out of them aromatic candles, which gave such a pleasant light on a winter's night.

She always looked like a flower, so sweet and quaint in her colored silk gowns and dainty shoes, for Babette took the same delight in dressing her daintily as she had been used to do in Paris. She grew tall and slender, even delicate-looking beside the rosy-cheeked children of the town.

Chapter XII

A RAMBLE IN THE WOODS



NE beautiful Sunday — it was a Sunday in Advent — Vrouw Van der Hoef dressed herself with great care. Her skirts were more ample than usual, and, as a finishing touch, she put on her head a fine silken hood but lately come from Holland. Margot wore a blue flowered paduasoy frock, and her big hat was caught up at the side with a long white plume. Around her neck was a white fur tippet, and her hands were thrust into an immense muff of the same fur. In Babette there was no change, save that she carried her head higher, if possible, than nature intended, for she was proud of the picture always before her — the charge she had in keeping. They were going to church.

Babette had been awakened in the night time by Gabriel, who had gone by as was his custom, and in a strong voice called out: “There’s a heavy frost to-night, and all ye who have neglected to cover up your vines, ye’ll have them all nipped.” Upon getting



• KINNEY •

SHE WALKED ALL UNCONSCIOUS OF THEIR SCRUTINY

up, Babette had immediately taken out her mistress's furs, and, when ready for church, insisted upon her wearing them, although the white mask laid over everything by Jack Frost was by that time dispersed by the sun. Perhaps something more than pride stirred in Babette's breast; a desire to show these settlers that hers was no commoner's child, that gold and silver she had, beside great beauty. If she wished to make a sensation she succeeded, although by this time the townspeople were used to the dainty child; still many pairs of eyes followed Margot as she walked to church, all unconscious of their scrutiny. The breezes fluttered her flowing skirts and ruffled her short curls.

The sermon was long. It seemed as if the good dominie would never bring his discourse to a close. How would you young people like to sit through a three-hour sermon? Such was the length of the preachings that the dominies of the Dutch church gave. No wonder little tired heads drooped, and sleep veiled eyes that fingers vainly tried to prop open. You could expect nothing else when the older people were not always exempt. Evidently the warden's expectations were different, for when the dominie was particularly tiresome or long-winded he was kept busy going from one culprit to

another. He tickled the faces of the older people with his long feather, but gave the little lad or lass who was either guilty of sleep or play a soundless whack with his stick, which was hardly air.

Still, everything comes to an end; and this Dutch dominie, blessed with a vehement style of delivery (although not tired of the sound of his own voice), remembered that there were dinners to be gotten, and that he and his people were hungry for them. With a loud amen, he dismissed his flock. They trooped out, the boys with a rush, anxious to finish their laughter, or hear the end of a secret a small voice had been trying to tell them all through the sermon. The older people were more decorous, although they too showed by the quickening of their heels and the way words came glibly to their lips how glad they were to be out in the air again. Some hurried on, thinking of the dinner to be prepared; others, men mostly, stayed to discuss the latest news brought by a pioneer.

Neptune was standing at the corner nearest the church, waiting for his mistress; well he knew that that spot was the limit. It seemed a waste of time to him, the hours spent in that gloomy building—you see he was only a dog. He showed his pleasure at the approach of Margot by the slow, even

waving of his plume above his back. In anticipation he smelt the frost under the leaves, which lay in heaps in the hollows of the woods, and he saw himself scattering them. Now he gave a short, glad bark or two, and ran after an invisible nothing, which would soon take the form of a squirrel.

After bidding good-by to Vrouw Van der Hoef and Babette, they walked through the town on toward the woods. How happy they were in each other's companionship! It was delightful to Margot to watch a rabbit, with ears cocked up, squatting on its haunches, looking at her from the corners of its eyes; and to see how, at a clumsy jump from Neptune, it would go scurrying away through the dead leaves; to watch a flock of blue jays scolding in a clump of trees; or a flock of geese on their way to the South; and to discover almost under her feet, half out of sight, a cluster of wintergreen berries. She always came back from her walks laden with pretty trophies of the fall, and that day was no exception. When she called to Neptune to come, her arms were overflowing with autumn leaves, in all their gorgeous colorings.

"Come, Neptune," she called; then she whistled to him, as he was sniffing and smelling suspiciously about. "What is 't, good boy? Dost want to

chase more squirrels? Not to-day; 't is time we started back, else we'll make the dinner cold waiting for us, and Babette would not like that."

They turned, but they had not gone far when an Indian stepped out from behind some bushes. This was no unusual occurrence, the woods were oft times thick with them. Neptune, with eyes alert and ears erect, waited; but as Margot after a gentle greeting was passing the man, he dropped his eyes as though caught in a fault, but only for a moment. The Indian deliberately stepped before Margot and barred her way.

"Indian no hurt you," he said; "come to the Great Chief Kwasind." He spoke in a broken dialect, a mixture of the French and Indian tongues. From this the child knew that he belonged to one of the Canadian tribes.

"No," she answered, and shook her head gently; "no, I cannot go with you to your Chief. I have never seen you before, I think."

"Yes, you have seen me — you come."

"I must beg you to stand aside and let me pass. I tell you again I cannot go."

While they were talking, Neptune, who disapproved of the Indian, kept up a low, fierce growling, and the Indian kept an eye upon him and a

hand upon the hilt of his hunting knife, which was stuck in his belt.

"Yes, you come. Great Chief Kwasind, who knows the way the waters glide; who knows when the Omemee homing flies; who knows when it is time for Segwun to wake all sleeping things to life again; who knows" — now there was great cunning in the Indian's voice — "where the white lady you are looking for stays."

"Oh! oh! You know something of my mother?"

"No, I no know. Great Chief knows all things."

"Of course I will go with you. Why did you not tell me so at once." Margot was all eagerness now. "But first we must go and tell Babette where we are going."

The wiley Indian gave a great grunt, as he said: "No, no. You come now, or Chief break camp and be gone — to-night — and you see him no more."

"Will you bring me back to this place if I go with you, when I have learned about Maman?"

"Yes, I bring you back."

"How far is Chief Kwasind's camp?"

"No far," he answered shortly.

Margot no longer hesitated; indeed she was all eagerness to be off on their errand. She put be-

hind her the thought that it was a dangerous thing to go into an unknown country with a strange Indian. She had heard many a story of children stolen by the Indians who had never come home again; and Babette would fret herself sick till she got back. But with a brave heart and a light footstep she set off with the Indian, saying to herself: "It will be only a few hours ere I come back again with the good news—the good news." She silenced her conscience by saying that she could not miss this opportunity of hearing something of her parents; no one—surely Babette would not blame her when she knew all.

On she followed the Indian, Neptune walking by her side; quiet enough now, poor dog! all the play gone from him, ears, tail, and head drooping. He gave vent to his dislike of the whole affair by uttering a deep growl every now and then. Once he gave a tug at his mistress's frock, as if to say, "This is not the way home; come, let's go back." But he had been taught to be obedient, and when Margot shook her head, for she knew what he wished, he went on, but dispiritedly.

They went through dense forests, and out into open places, and then through woods again, meeting no one, with only a narrow path to guide them,

and sometimes not even that. The way was well known to the Indian, who led the child onward without any qualms. The distance was long to Margot, and she wondered what an Indian's "no far" meant.

Chapter XIII

IN KWASIND'S CAMP



HE knew that they should soon be at their journey's end, for she could smell smoke from a camp fire, which seemed very near. It was not so near as it seemed, however, and it was quite a while before they came upon the Indians. At first she could distinguish nothing (coming so suddenly into the bright glare of the firelight from the dense blackness of the woods) but a number of dusky moving forms standing out like silhouetted figures in the rosy glow of the fire. Soon they took definite shape, and she saw the squaws cooking food in huge pots hung from tripods over the fires, which young lasses kept fiercely burning by heaping on fagots. She saw the braves grouped about in characteristic attitudes, idle young lads mingling with them. Lastly she saw Chief Kwasind seated in their centre.

They were not in war dress, and seemed peacefully inclined. If they were surprised when she

stepped into their midst with her dog by her side, not an Indian showed it. The one who brought her did not give them time for much conjecture. He went up to the Chief and immediately began talking to him in their own dialect, which of course Margot could not understand. The Indians all listened, smoking stoically on, and there were no comments from them, only an occasional "ugh" from the Chief. The children crowded about her, and began to pester her, while the lads at once wanted to take possession of Neptune. From out the group of listening braves an Indian, tall and supple, came and stood before them all. It was Meshinauwa, a friendly Narragansett whom Margot had often seen in and about Vrouw Van der Hoef's house. She ran to him with a glad cry, flinging off her tormentors with a quick gesture.

"O Meshinauwa! I am so glad to see you. I did not think there was any one here that I knew. I am so glad! Will you ask the Chief to tell me all he knows of my mother, so I may hurry back? I am afraid they will miss me and worry."

"Yes, Little Majesty Two-shoes," he replied, using the name he had caught from hearing the children call her so. "I will speak to the Great Chief Kwasind."

He began eagerly, eloquently, to tell that she was a great white child, Little Majesty Two-shoes by name, and that she had been set apart by the Great Spirit. He told how she had come over in a big ship, with only her dog; how she wandered about and was never molested, looking for a white lady; and he added, moreover, that she was under the protection of a big warrior, who would not leave one of their tribe alive if any harm came to the pale face.

All might have been well but for this last, which angered the Chief so greatly that he started up, grasped his tomahawk, and, while waving it threateningly about, gave Meshinauwa in a few words to understand that Kwasind was afraid of no one or anything under the stars. Nothing daunted by the boastful manner of the Chief, Meshinauwa continued to plead that the child be sent back to New Amsterdam; that her people (meaning the people with whom she lived) were good people — good to the Indians. For a moment, but only for a moment, Kwasind appeared to hesitate, but avarice overcame him.

“No,” he answered. “We no hurt her; take her with us and sell her — she bring heep big money.”

Margot waited patiently, looking anxiously from

one to the other of the men. When there was a lull in their talk, and her pleader, with a shrug and a resigned look, sat himself down, she saw her opportunity to ask the Chief concerning her mother.

"Great Chief Kwasind," she spoke in French, "is it true that you know where my mother is?"

"Yes," he replied, speaking the same broken language as the Indian who had brought her to the camp. "I take you up to Canada, and there you find her."

"You have seen her, you have seen her!" she cried, her voice breaking in her eagerness. "Oh, do please tell me all about her, do please!"

"No. You wait. We break camp to-morrow early and go to Canada."

"But I cannot go with you to Canada without letting Babette know. Surely you will tell me about my dear mother first — 't was only for that I came."

He answered her never a word. She realized that nothing was to be gotten from him, and disappointment deep as the sea fell upon her.

"Come, we must go," she said, stepping up to the Indian with whom she had come. "I am sorry to trouble you, but it grows so late, and they will worry about me at home."

She waited a few seconds for him to get up from where he was sitting, but he never budged an inch, which she thought very rude, so at last she said: —

“If you are too tired, mayhap Meshinauwa will take me,” looking toward the tall form of Meshinauwa, who avoided her glance.

Whether it was the imputation that he was tired, or the pleading look in Margot's eyes he could not stand, I know not, but the Indian said, a swift, cruel smile crossing his face: —

“No; you go not back, you little prisoner. Take you to Canada and sell you. Big warrior want you; he come get you, ugh.”

“You are a wicked Indian, and have told me a lie,” she said, turning from him, with scorn in her voice. Still, she did not think they meant to keep her, and she turned once more to Kwasind.

“Chief, you are great in the land you rule. Surely if you have seen my mother, you will not withhold it from her child. Long — long have been the days since I saw her last; if you know aught I beg of you to tell me.”

And again he answered her never a word.

Then Margot felt that she had come upon a mistaken quest indeed, and that she had been her own undoing. Meshinauwa even shook his head when

she appealed to him; he could do nothing for her, however much he may have wanted to. She was ready to cry with disappointment at not learning what she had come for, but in her heart a little flower blossomed—the flower of hope; perhaps in Canada, a settlement of French people, she might learn of her mother, perhaps find her there. So she turned proudly away from the band of stolid Indians, gazing at her with such utter indifference, and consoled herself as best she could with such thoughts. She sat down a little apart from the rest, with Neptune by her side. She laid her hand upon his shaggy coat, and wished and wished she were back in Vrouw Van der Hoef's snug kitchen. She shut her eyes the better to bring the picture before her: the good huys-vrouw and Babette were sitting by the fire spinning, no doubt, now the work was done, and baby Jan was lying in his cradle, gurgling and cooing. For one moment it was so real to her that she felt not the children who were tormenting her, nor heard the sharp whacking of Meshinauwa's heavy hand, as he sent them off, bidding them let her alone under penalty of worse. A squaw rudely aroused her from her dream by giving her a shove, which almost upset her, while she pointed to some supper that she had brought her.

Margot thanked her, and tried to swallow a little of the unappetizing mess, but utterly failed, and Neptune got it all. Then a warm blanket was handed her; and, seeing that the others had wrapped themselves in theirs and laid down to sleep, she tried to do the same. It was not easy for the tiny hands, the handling of the large, rough blanket, and it was not over-clean, and her fastidiousness rebelled. Still, there was nothing else to do, no one to help her, and it was cold; necessity taught her to help herself, and she succeeded in rolling herself in the blanket, and Neptune stretched himself at her side.

If the thought of escape entered her tired brain, it did not stay in it long. Escape — with an Indian sitting before the fire, never closing his eyes, but smoking — smoking? Great clouds of smoke came from his pipe, and encircled him about like a cloak. He looked to her excited imagination like one of those pictures of demons in the illuminated books she had oft pored over in her own France — dear France — farther away than ever now.

Wrapped in her blanket, she knelt and said a prayer, felt of her miniature to be sure it was safe, snuggled close to Neptune, and fell asleep.

Early next morning they were on the move, and

so continued, only stopping to eat and at night to sleep. On — and on — and on — they went.

There came a day before they reached their destination when Margot could go no farther. The blue shoes were in shreds; the pretty frock was in rags, and covered with briars; the fur muff and tippet and hat adorned some one else's neck and head. Her feet were all scratched and bleeding.

She stopped and faltered, "I can go no farther." Neptune squatted at her side, and pulled the load he was dragging down also, and there he waited.

"You go on," said an Indian nearest her in a threatening tone.

Margot shook her head, too exhausted to speak, while Neptune growled.

"You go on," again the Indian said, but this time he raised his whip in a menacing manner over Margot's head. Quick as you have seen a star drop in the heavens, Neptune jumped upon him. The load containing blankets and utensils, which was fastened to him, was as nothing in his fury. Down they fell in a heap, dog, Indian, and load, all mixed together in the fight. Now could the Indian have gotten his hand on his knife, or Neptune his grip on his enemy's throat, it would have gone hard with either. But Neptune, being overburdened with the weight

of his load, now that the man lay still beneath him, was content to keep him so.

Meshinauwa, who had seen the fight from the file ahead where he was walking, came back to them. He bade Margot call the dog off, telling her that he would not let the Indian hurt them. He rather enjoyed the other's discomfiture, and peremptorily bade him go on, and molest Little Majesty Two-shoes no more. He saw that Margot was utterly unable to move; and he made a swing on his back, and, putting her in it, bore her much as the squaws did their pappooses. He trotted all day with his burden in perfect ease. Neptune, now satisfied, walked beside them.

Margot felt better when they reached their next halting-place, having slept throughout the entire day on Meshinauwa's back. After she had pecked at some of the Indian food, even as a bird might, she cuddled herself up in her blanket by Neptune, and thought she would take a peep at her miniature before sleeping. It was not often she allowed herself this pleasure. She had been despoiled of most everything, and it seemed almost a miracle that the bright eyes of some one of the children had not discovered the hiding-place of her miniature. It had been a great comfort to her, and she never slept (if she feared to

look at it) without at least feeling if it were safe. She put her hand into the little pocket hidden beneath the folds of her dress; she was kneeling, her blanket tight about her, head and all. Her hand touched—nothing. It was gone! She got up and shook out her dress; she felt on the ground about her; she turned her pocket inside out; she peered in among the leaves and bracken; and then she gave it up for lost. She turned to Neptune (who was nosing about, trying to help her, although he knew not what it was all about) and cried:—

“I have lost it, my miniature, I have lost it!” Tears ran down her thin cheeks, which Neptune licked off as fast as they came.

Meshinauwa heard this unusual weeping and came to her. He wanted to know what ailed Little Majesty Two-shoes.

“I have lost something. Didst see it, good Meshinauwa, a little picture wrapped in a velvet cloth?”

“No, I no see,” he replied, with averted eyes; “you lost it? Never mind; you get another.”

“Never,” she said, with trembling lips. “It was my mother’s, and she gave it to me the last thing before I left my home in France. What shall I do?”

The Indian tried to pacify her in his rough way, but Margot refused to be comforted. All night long with her arms about Neptune's neck, her hair mingling with his shaggy coat, between her sobs she prayed that she might find her miniature again.

The next morning it was a very worn and spent child that Meshinauwa took upon his back. Toward evening they began to see dwellings scattered along a river, and from the Indians' talk Margot knew that they were reaching a Canadian settlement.

Chapter XIV

A COBBLER OF FORT ST-L



It was a very medley of a winter's day. Great flakes of snow came down one moment, to be followed the next by hail, and that in turn by tiny flakes, so tiny as to feel like rain. The snow had drifted into heaps, for the storm had been of some days' duration. The wind blew a gale, and took up the snow and flung it sportively about. It whistled through the branches and made eddying circles about the trunks of the trees, and altogether conducted itself in a riotous manner. It was a storm as furious as you might expect to see on the frozen steppes of Siberia. The branches of the fir trees were bowed almost to the ground with their weight of snow; as for the shrubs and bracken, they lay low on the bosom of mother earth, completely buried in the drifts. The houses and huts scattered here and there among the trees were covered with her white mantle, and looked like little cotton toy houses.

Such was the day when Meshinauwa, with another Indian, by name Winka, entered the outposts of a Canadian fort. They stumbled on, half blind from the snow. In Meshinauwa's arms nestled Margot, and he was bent double with his burden, and white as a snow man.

Meshinauwa had been kind to Margot. Perhaps it was because she had expected nothing else from him; had given him to understand that she looked upon him as her only friend among the Indians after Neptune. Perhaps it was because he knew that the right hand of Désiré d'Albert was heavy, and did not hesitate to fall. Désiré d'Albert was cosmopolitan enough to borrow the motto of the English throne — "*Dieu et mon droit*" — thinking it a good one, and he knew, moreover, how to carry it out to the letter, to the dismay of his enemies.

Little Majesty Two-shoes! Where now were the exquisite shoes that were wont to set off a pair of daintily moulded feet, and that danced so demurely over the fallen leaves, seeming to hardly touch them, that Sunday so long ago? Gone were the silken stockings, gone the kid bottines, not one vestage left, not one blue scrap. About her feet were leather moccasins many sizes too large, so

that straw had been used to hold them on, and also to add warmth. The child was more ragged than any beggar who slunk along the byways of Paris. Could Mike, that rough-hearted lad, have seen her now, he would not have been able to call forth one tiny jeer; his black eyes would only have opened wide in his astonishment. The child from Paris, Margot Dantier, Little Majesty Two-shoes — call her what you will — had indeed fallen upon evil days. She had lost her dog Neptune. This was how it happened. A few leagues from the fort of St-L, where they had last rested, an Indian had tied the dog to a stake. He submitted good-naturedly, having early learned that the best way to please his mistress was to be docile. Margot asked the man why he did so, for they had always been allowed their freedom — for the Indians well knew that the child could not escape, and that the dog would not leave his mistress. He answered her brutally: "Dog he stay with us; be good to haul and fetch. You go when you get rested."

Margot did not at first grasp his meaning, being so nearly exhausted, and again she did not think it possible that they would be so cruel to her. Not having been particularly kind, they yet had not been needlessly severe with either of the prisoners

on the march. 'T is true, Neptune had a heavy load to drag, so that his feet were cut and bruised from the stones and bracken, but he was a strong dog. They all had some burden to bear, and bore it uncomplainingly. She could not think that they would dare do this wicked deed — that God would look down and allow them to carry it out.

When she found that they really meant to keep her dog, for they soon made it plain enough even to her doubting senses, she begged and pleaded with the Chief to let her stay with them. It was the first time she had spoken to Kwasind since that night when she had pleaded so earnestly with him to let her know if he had really heard anything of her mother. She told him that she would work, she was strong (which the trembling of her limbs and the pinched face and hollowness of her eyes belied), she would gather the wood for the fires; do anything if they would not take her dog from her. Did they not know that Captain Hezekiah Brown gave him to her, she asked him. Again he answered her neither yea nor nay; paid no more heed to her piteous pleadings than he might have to the buzzing of a big fly.

"Thou art a wicked Chief," she said at last, fixing solemn eyes upon him. "Dost not know that it is



ANGERED THE CHIEF SO GREATLY THAT HE STARTED UP

stealing to take my Neptune from me? God will punish thee, and when my good friend Désiré d'Albert finds that thou hast stolen my Neptune, I doubt not but he will kill thee."

The Chief started up, and, as he waved his tomahawk close about her head, began to boast of his many conquests and of the scalp locks which hung at his girdle. Then did Margot, who was gray to the lips, think that her last hour had come. With eyes that saw not, she looked at him, and to her lips came a prayer. But Kwasind had no intention of slaying her, else had he done so before to save the burden of feeding one more. With a grunt of pleasure at the thought of how he had frightened the child (although she stood bravely before him, no muscles quivering), he quietly slipped his tomahawk back in its place and sat down.

Knowing all pleading would be in vain, she turned away, and went to where her dog was picketed. She threw her arms about his neck for the last time and laid her face close to his.

"Be good, my dog Neptune," she whispered, "so they will not hurt thee. *Le petit bon Dieu* will help us, I am sure."

The dog began to whine, as if he knew what she was saying, and Margot tried not to restrain the big

tears which rolled down her face. She stayed by him, patting him and whispering sobbing words in his ear, until the others were ready to go. Then she left him, after kissing the white star on his forehead and murmuring, "Good-bye, good-bye." Neptune let out a most disconsolate howl, and pulled at his rope, making such strenuous efforts to get loose that even the descending whip in the Indian's hand had no power to make him desist.

Margot's eyes were so full of tears that she could not see where she was going. She took a few tremulous steps, her arms out, groping like a blind person, staggered, and then fell. Good Meshinauwa picked her up in his arms, and so they came into the fort.

As the men plodded through the snow toward the more thickly settled part of the fort, Meshinauwa, with his load, ran into a man coming from the opposite direction. The man walked with his head bent downward to keep the snow from his eyes, and was evidently hurrying to his home, the sooner to be out of the storm. He was dressed from head to foot in wolf-skins, and he carried, swung over one shoulder, a number of tanned hides, and over the other a string of shoes to be mended. He was a cobbler, known throughout Canada as a good

workman and an honest man. His name was Simon Fargè.

“Halloo there! Can’t you see a fellow?” he cried out, in a comical voice, as he stopped and, throwing back his head, brushed the snow from his face with his hand. “Halloo you, who are you, and what do you mean by nearly knocking a fellow down?”

Meshinauwa, who had recovered from the collision, was slipping quickly past, but Simon grabbed his blanket with a strong hand, and effectually stopped him.

“Don’t be in such a hurry. Ah! I see — it is Meshinauwa and Winka. What have you there, and where are you going in such a rush?” he asked, as he pulled the blanket from Margot’s face, which gleamed pale as the drifted snow about them from the shadow of its dark folds. “I see — a little pale face. Dead, I see, too.” The Indians grunted, and both peered into the child’s face with its closed eyes, and then they gave another big grunt of disgust.

“I see. It is a stolen child. You were going to take her to the governor and get the reward, eh? Stolen from the English colonies, eh? Not this time, and it serves you right, serves you right.”

After a moment, seeing the disgust on Winka's face, for nothing seemed to escape his eyes, which were as bright as a bird's, he continued: —

“Yes, dead, quite dead, I'm afraid. You get nothing for a dead child — better give her to me. I will give you one bale of tobacco for her, dead or alive. If she lives and her people ransom her, I will give you half; if she dies, I will bury her. Come to my house, and I will draw up the paper.”

The Indians were glad to make any kind of a bargain, for they thought Margot dead. A bale of tobacco was of considerably more value to them than any child, whether dead or alive. After a grunt or two, and trying to induce Simon to make it two bales, but he would not be moved from his original proposition, they turned and went with him to his hut.

Simon's domicile was a cozy house built of logs and plastered over. A loft was above, entered by a pair of steps. Down stairs it consisted of one room, large and neat, although there was no woman near, and Simon was his own housekeeper. On one side there was a brick fireplace, with its chimney built on the outside. The fire had gotten low, for Simon had been out a long time, but the kettle, hanging on

the crane, still simmered. On the far side of the fireplace was a bed, which was folded up, but could be let down on hinges. On the near side were the bench and cobbler tools, with a model or two, for Simon Fargè was a shoemaker as well as a cobbler. Little enough trade he had at making shoes, as the Canadian settlers had them mostly sent from home; the squaws making their moccasins and leggings. Simon had all the patching he could do and more, so he made a comfortable living, since he had only himself to care for, having long ago laid his wife and only child to rest in the small church graveyard.

They entered the house, and Simon, throwing down his pack in one corner, went to the bed and let it down. He bade Meshinauwa put the child upon it. He turned next to a tiny table, and took from its drawer an ink horn and pen. He then wrote in a labored manner: —

“ The English prisoner, given to Simon Fargè this day in the year of our Lord 1685, has been paid for by Simon Fargè with one bale of tobacco to Indians Meshinauwa and Winka. If she lives to be ransomed by her people, half shall go to me and half to Indians named

“ (*Signed*) SIMON FARGÈ.

“ MESHINAUWA.

“ WINKA.”

He read this aloud to them when he had finished, and underneath it they drew the totems of their tribes.

“Come in a week or so and see if she lives; but I fear me, I fear me,” he said, as he gave them the tobacco.

Meshinauwa went to the cot whereon Margot lay, apparently dead, and he was troubled in his heart, and murmured: “Little Majesty Two-shoes, too bad! too bad!” And he went out softly. Winka went off chuckling at what he thought a good bargain. Then Simon Fargè smiled too, and with perhaps greater cause.

Chapter XV

LITTLE MAJESTY TWO-SHOES



IMON smiled again, as he waited near the door until he had heard the last of their retreating footsteps, when he hasped the latch, drew the muslin curtain closer about his window, and then went to mend the fire. He blew up the embers with a pair of bellows, put on a log of wood, and turned the crane so that the kettle should be directly over the growing flame. He watched it for a moment with a critical look, and, satisfied that he should soon have a roaring fire, his next act was to go to an old wardrobe at the far end of the room, where he opened a drawer and reverently took from it a faded calico night-dress. As he unfolded this he pressed it to his trembling lips, and a faint sweet odor of lavender was wafted through the room. He knelt by the bed, and gently as a woman undressed the child, and put upon her the sweet, clean night-gown. His face puckered itself in pain when he saw the condition of her feet and hands, torn and calloused,

and the haggardness of her face and the thinness of her body. He bathed, rubbed, and anointed her. Soon he had his reward, for the gentle rising and falling of her chest told him that she was indeed alive.

The kettle by this time was merrily singing. He took it off the hob and made a good strong drink of some herbs which he had previously taken from the rafters overhead. Indeed, there were many things tucked away in Simon's hut of which the casual observer would never have dreamed.

This drink he forced down Margot's throat very carefully, so as not to spill a drop on her fresh night-dress, and then he covered her up closely.

As he listened to catch the regular breathing of the child, a delighted sigh escaped him, and he rubbed his hands behind his back, a way he had when either pleased or agitated. His work done, he sat himself down to await developments.

Looking in the fire, he saw pleasant pictures; his face softened, even the wrinkles were smoothed out for a time. Was the little hut to echo once more to the prattle of a child's voice? Were the old rafters to resound to a child's laughter? Were the worn boards to squeak beneath the tread of a child's dancing step? He asked himself these questions,

and his heart beat hopefully, encouragingly, as it answered him yes. Truly God was good, and Mother Mary also. They knew his loneliness and had not forgotten him, but had sent him this child. She was his (he hugged the thought hungrily); he had bought and paid for her. If her people came — ah! that was an ugly thought, and he put it from him.

Between dozing, every now and then he would start up and go and look at his patient. All night he kept his solitary vigil while the child slept.

In the morning, after he had had his breakfast (he remembered with a smile that he had eaten no supper the night before), he seated himself by the fire, and began pegging away at a shoe with an immense gaping toe, which he would soon make neat and whole again with a simple piece of leather.

Margot opened her eyes, looked at the quaint figure seated on a stool before the open fireplace, then wearily closed them again. She listened to the clunk, clunk, of the little wooden pegs that were being pounded into the sole of the shoe. Where had she heard just such a noise as that? It was strangely familiar to her. She thought and thought, but could not recall it. And who was that little old man? Had she ever seen him before? She could

not tell. Again she opened her eyes and looked at him.

Let me make you see what Margot saw. A little old man, not so old as he looked, however, for hard work and great exposure had seamed his face before his time into a myriad of wrinkles, which began at his forehead and extended down both his cheeks to his chin. His nose was long, and his chin square and firm. His eyes were small, deep set, and a bright, keen gray. He was smooth shaven. Low down on his nose were steel-bowed spectacles. When he looked over the tops of them, as he often did, for he needed them only for his work, you caught such a benign expression in their depths that you could not fail to know that goodness ruled his heart. He was dressed in small clothes of heavy worsted, a brown woollen shirt, knitted stockings and heavy low shoes. He looked extremely neat.

Simon Fargè had lived in Canada for twenty years and more. He had buried his wife and only child, the idol of his heart, years ago. They had both died of a fever, brought on by poor food or the scarcity of it during the time when very little of anything was sent from the mother country, and so many of her children perished. Yes, those were hard times; many heads became white in a few

years, faces became seamed from grief and care. You could hardly tell the old from the young, and the graveyard became fat with new-made mounds. Then better times came; and although Simon never threw off his prematurely old look, his heart was young. The Indians knew him well and trusted him. His crust was always divided with the poor that came to his door, and he was looked upon by all with great kindness.

"If it please thee, who art thou?" a weak voice asked.

Simon jumped up and almost ran toward the bed, he was so delighted to hear the voice of the child.

"Well, well, so you are awake? How do you feel?"

"I feel very tired," she answered.

"Do you, eh? Why, of course you do. Wait until Simon gets you some broth; then we shall see."

While he busied himself warming her some strong broth, Margot watched him anxiously, and again said:

"If it please thee, who art thou? Have I ever seen thee before? I cannot remember."

"No, dear little miss, you have never seen me before to my recollection. My name is Simon

Fargè, a cobbler of Fort St-L in Canada, and your very humble servant to command."

"Is this Canada?"

"A small part of it, dear miss."

Now the gruel being ready, he fed her very deftly. While Margot was eating—she was hungry and it was good—her eyes kept looking from the sleeve of her colored night-dress up into Simon's face and back again.

"Dost know how I came here?" she asked, in an anxious voice.

"Yes," he answered her, in a soothing tone. "Shut those tired eyes and sleep now; when strong enough, I will tell you all about it."

Back she snuggled in the soft, warm bed, and soon was fast asleep again. When she awakened, the sun had come up in the east and gone part way down again, and Simon was sitting in the same place as if he had not moved. Moreover, he was still pegging at his work.

She sat up in bed, and, after looking about the large room, and at Simon with a puzzled air, said:

"I think I will get up, if I may."

"Certainly, dear miss, certainly. I will get your clothes."

Sure enough, those were her own clothes, brushed,



HE FED HER VERY DEFTLY

mended, and dried. Surely that was her own blue frock, although faded and patched. She had never had a patch on a frock before, and she fingered it doubtfully.

She gave a vague, uneasy sigh and shook her head, as if to bring her thoughts together. It was of no avail. Everything relating to her past was a blank.

When she was washed, and her hair, so full of tangles and matted to her head, was brushed into ringlets about her neck, she looked herself, only a slighter, daintier copy.

Simon, as he watched her, kept rubbing his hands together. Then he bade her sit down and eat the food he had placed on the little table.

"Tell me, dear miss, what is your name?"

"My name," she repeated, slowly; "what is my name? Little Majesty Two-shoes, that is it. No, no; but I seem to hear some one call me that." She looked down at her feet, on which Simon had put stockings of his own child's, and a tiny pair of moccasins. "My name—how strange I do not know what it is. I have forgotten it. Dost know it?" she added, appealing to him.

"No, dear miss, I do not. I forgot to ask the rascals. But never mind, never mind," seeing Mar-

got's face fall, and a disappointed look come into it; "they will be here in a few days, and then we shall know all about it. Little Majesty Two-shoes is a good enough name until then. In a short time I doubt not but you will remember all."

"Little Majesty Two-shoes! Little Majesty Two-shoes! Why 'Little Majesty Two-shoes'?" she murmured; and she looked again at her feet. She crossed her legs and slipped off one of the moccasins and held it in her hand. "These are very pretty slippers. I never saw any like them before, such dear, colored beads! Where did I get them? Are they mine?"

"Yours, dear miss," he answered. "They are Indian moccasins, and they belonged to my dear child. She would ask you to accept of them if she were here, as I do now. I remember when I gave them to her. It was on her birthday — how pleased she was as she put them on and danced up and down the length of this room, her skirts held up to show them off."

"And where is she now, good Simon?"

"Where the innocent are — in Paradise. She died many years ago."

"Dead! Poor Simon! Dost live all alone in this little house?"

"All alone, dear miss."

"All alone! all alone! God must have pitied thee, Simon, and sent me to take the place of thy dead child."

"God is good, dear miss."

"But thou hast not told me, good Simon, how I came to thee."

"Meshinauwa and Winka, two Indians, brought you. Can you not remember your home?"

"Indians and my home?" she said, in astonishment. "No; it is all a blank. I can remember nothing; but I seem to have lost something. Did I not have something with me, good Simon, when they brought me?"

"Nothing, Little Majesty Two-shoes," he said, with a smile, as he recalled the forlorn condition of the child, "but what you have on and an old blanket, which they carried off."

Simon watched her as she resumed her meal. He noticed the dainty way she ate, the exquisite cut of her features, and a great overwhelming pity for her came over him that brought a film before his eyes. Poor child! what must she have endured to have so affected her brain as to leave memory a blank. How remiss he had been in not finding out all he could from the Indians. Now he would have

to wait until they came to find whether she lived or died.

Margot took her stool and sat by the fire, while watching Simon at his work. She became more puzzled as the daylight grew dimmer, and the light in the room took on a grayness, and the firelight, playing on Simon's hands, made them the most easily discerned things in the room. She watched them plying in and out of his work. She began to murmur, as if talking almost unconsciously:

"Good Simon, as I half shut my eyes, it looks hazy, as dreams do in the morning before I am quite awake. I see a work-room — a big, big work-room, with high windows in it, which throw the light down into the dark room upon the heads of many men who are stitching there. Yes, yes" — there was now a faint quiver of excitement in her voice — "they are making shoes; such pretty shoes! Flash, flash, go the needles in and out of the leather, and I can smell the burning wax and smoke from the flame. Many little wooden pegs lie upon the floor; pails of water stand about; piles of shoe models lie in the corners; and great stacks of leather are heaped upon the floor. There is one of the men who looks like thee, — yes, quite like thee, only his face is redder. Near him is a little girl not unlike me, only

she hath long, golden curls that are always getting in her way; they bother her, and she brushes them impatiently aside. She is so happy sitting there among those men, who are so good and so merry. Every now and then one breaks out into a song, and the others take it up; soon they all sing, the treble and the bass sometimes ringing loud above the others and completely drowning them out. Where have I seen it all? It is so real, so real to me!"

"It does seem strange," Simon said, gazing at her intently. "Perhaps you dreamed it while lying in yonder bed."

"Yes; perhaps I did, and that is why when I first opened my eyes and looked about this room it was so new and yet so very old to me."

"We will not bother about the old, only think of the new; and that is that you are Simon's little miss. Try and be happy, for the good God does all things for the best."

"I will remember. If God wishes I should remember my old life, He will bring it about."

And so Margot began a new life under Simon Fargè's hospitable roof.

Chapter XVI

WILL NO ONE TAKE UP AN OLD WOMAN'S CAUSE?



ET us go back somewhat, back to that day when Margot went so peacefully to church, and then disappeared so mysteriously. In the hearts of the people congregated in Vrouw Van der Hoef's cozy Dutch home, there was great consternation and fear.

Babette went to the end of the street a dozen times. She looked up and down, and still no sight of the child was to be had. After she had been everywhere that she had ever heard of Margot's going, the hour being late, she could stand it no longer. So Gabriel was called upon, and he went through the town, crying: "Lost, Margot Dantier, ye little French child, sometimes called Little Majesty Two-shoes! Had on a blue paduasoy frock, and a bonnet, and two blue kid shoes. Lost! Lost!" and he rang his bell loudly.



"LOST!"

No one remembered anything of the French child after she had left the meeting, save one old dame, who said that she had seen her going toward the hills, with her dog beside her, and her blue gown fluttering in the breeze.

"An' she made so winsome a picture I watched her, 'til she grew small and smaller, and vanished out of sight yonder," the old dame muttered, while she pointed with her long, bony finger toward the distant hills, and shook her grizzled head mournfully. "The Indians! The Indians! I'm feered ye'll ne'er see her more."

The old dame leaned upon her crutch, as she stood out in the street, and seemed almost to take pleasure in telling over and over again the same thing, adding that she had seen many a brave lass like that, decked out in all her finery so sweet and pretty, and then the Indians would come, and the little lass would be no more — gone out like a candle in a gust of wind.

Such ominous mumblings almost drove Babette distracted, and she ran everywhere, the tears streaming down her cheeks and her hair all blown awry. Poor old Babette! What cared she? Her charge was lost — lost in those dreadful woods!

What answer should she make to *Sieur Dantier*,

when he asked her for his child? The more she thought of the weird things she had heard since her arrival in the New World, the more like a mad woman she became. She would have wandered out into the woods alone had she not been restrained.

The good Mynheer tried to appease her by saying, "Come, do not take on so, dame. I have got two Indian runners, and have sent them upon the trail to see if they can trace her. We must wait. 'T will not be long before they find some trace of the child. They may even find her and bring her back; if not, we shall at least know where to look for her. As 't is now, 't is like looking for a needle in a haystack."

The people, feeling confident that Margot had been stolen, went back to their homes. Little ones clung in half affright to their mothers' skirts. No impatient words fell from parents' tongues, however unruly their children were that night. Many a mother, as she cuddled her darlings to her heart, gave them more kisses than usual, and thanked God for their safety.

Lights were put out one by one in the different houses, as the people went to rest. Hushed were the streets where all had been tumult, so still, so still. Back to the deserted house went the Van der

Hoef family. It looked to Babette as though pale death had laid his icy hand upon it, so silent, so lonely it was without the presence of the child and her dog. Baby Jan, safe in his mother's arms, blinked and blinked, and no doubt wondered what it all meant.

"Come, good Babette," coaxed the Vrouw, "come, do not fret so. Take this dish of tea or some of this hot posset that I have made for you. You must not be sick. If they find the child and bring her home, she may need you."

The idea that Margot might need her was enough, and the old nurse swallowed the posset at a gulp. Then she relapsed into a stony apathy, nor would she go to bed, but sat by the fire all the long night, waiting, waiting.

The next day toward dusk the Indians returned. They had travelled many miles since the night before, following the trail of the child and her dog. In among the leaves they had found a tiny silver buckle which had fastened one of the blue kid shoes. Babette took it in her trembling hands, and hugged it to her breast, while she burst into tears. About five miles from the town as the crow flies, another trail had been added to the two straggling ones — an Indian's. Then they led farther and farther

away from the town to a camping ground, where there had been many Indians. Heretofore there had been no desire to hide the trail; now all was changed. The ashes were scattered, and all an Indian's sagacity and cunning had been brought to work to hide all traces as if the party feared pursuit. But Indian cunning was pitted against Indian cunning in this case, and the runners still managed to follow the trails, although now with difficulty. They led to the Hudson River, where beneath overhanging banks canoes had been in hiding. In these the whole party must have embarked, and either crossed to the other side or drifted down the stream, the Indians could not tell which. They knew, however, that the Indians with whom the child had gone were Canadian Indians from a peculiar bead found near the camp.

No doubt now remained in any one's mind that the child was being taken North, there to be held for a ransom.

"Come, good woman, cheer up," cried Vrouw Van der Hoef encouragingly to Babette, when the Indians had told all they knew of the child. "We shall find her. Remember she has that big dog to protect her. We will get together tobacco, and Mynheer will hire a party of men to drag it to

Canada, and there we shall ransom her. 'T will not be long before we have her here again, and see her sweet face smiling at us."

"Oh, dost thou think so, dost thou think so?" cried the old dame, taking heart again. "I will pay anything. I have plenty of money; only let them go at once. My poor master and mistress, have they not had trouble enough? What if they should come now? I pray God they do not come till I have found my nursling. My dear heart! my dear heart!"

The two women mingled their tears, while clasped in one another's arms. Vrouw Van der Hoef's big heart ached for the lone woman, and she felt great sadness herself, for she too loved the lost child.

"Here comes Mynheer; let us hear what he has to say," said the Vrouw. "He has been to see the governor to ask his advice. Well, well," she called out impatiently to him ere he had mounted the stoop, "what does he say?"

But Mynheer dubiously shook his head, as he answered, "It is no good; he does not think it wise to start now. He says that we will not gain anything by being rash. See the sky. Before night we shall have a heavy fall of snow. We would be snowbound — he is a wise man and he knows. In

the spring, when the snows melt, then he promises to make up a party and do what he can. And I agree with him," he finished, in his stolid Dutch way, that quite upset Babette.

"Oh, my lost child!" she cried.

"They will not harm her, believe me, Dame."

"How dost know? How dost know?" she cried, in a fury. "What if it had been baby Jan — wouldst thou delay then?"

"I should have to, if I could not do otherwise."

"If only Monsieur d'Albert were here," she said, turning from him, "he would go, I am sure. He was so friendly and so brave. I shall go to the governor myself, and see if I cannot find a few brave men who will take up an old woman's cause."

So to the governor's house she hastened, to plead with him to lend her aid. He put her off, promising to do what he could. Indeed, it was not his fault that no one could be found to go, for in the town there was a dearth of men just at that time, many being away on different expeditions, so that the governor feared to let any more leave, lest they be attacked by the Indians, and then the women and children of the town would suffer.

Oh, the long winter days, and the longer nights, to the desolate woman, who wept and waited!

Chapter XVII

THE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL



RIP a troup a troujes," blithely sang Vrouw Van der Hoef to baby Jan, as she rocked him to slumber, forgetful for the moment of the sad-hearted Babette.

"Sing not that song," burst out Babette, from her corner by the hearth, "I pray thee, else I go mad."

"Forgive me, Babette, I will not," she softly answered, laying down in his cradle the now fast asleep baby.

Just then a knock was heard at the door, and before any one could call a welcome, it was thrown back with a bang, and Désiré d'Albert and a young lad walked in.

"Well, how do you do, my friends? I give you greeting." He stopped, having caught the woe-begone and changed look upon Babette's face, and her fervent, "Thank God! At last he comes!"

"What is it? What has happened? Where is my Little Majesty Two-shoes?" he asked, in rapid succession.

"Lack-a-day! Lack-a-day!" was all the old nurse could utter, as she rocked her body to and fro.

"Not dead? Surely not dead?" in a low voice from Monsieur.

"We do not know. She is gone — stolen — the Indians!" she managed at last to gasp.

"Ah!" and Désiré d'Albert drew in his breath with a relieved sigh. "There, there, my good woman, in a moment you shall tell me all about it. This is my nephew Pierre, Vrouw Van der Hoef. May he sit down and dry himself, while I hear about this?"

Babette proceeded to give him a very disjointed account of what they knew about the carrying off of Margot, interspersed with many expressions of contempt for all the people living in this town of the New World. Then Vrouw Van der Hoef, her duties as hostess over for the present, added her story to it, and it became plainer to Monsieur. He listened without many interruptions until they had finished, when he said:

"I think it is the wandering tribe of Kwasind that have done this deed. They are a sneaking lot,

and if they have harmed a hair of her head, by the God of Hosts —” and he swore a great oath — “I will not leave one of them standing.”

“Thank God, thou art come!” again said the old nurse; “I knew thou wouldst go after her and bring her back to me. The cowardly English and the lazy Dutch will do nothing.”

“Nay, blame not the people in this colony,” he said, “they are all brave men. It is not their custom to go gallivanting about the country as I do. They have business of state and other serious matters to attend to.”

“Yes, they had excuses enough,” she muttered.

“No doubt good ones,” he quickly retorted. “But I can and will go. So, Pierre, if you care to go North again I will take you. Get you dried and thoroughly rested. If the good huys-vrouw will give you some dinner, we can soon start. I shall go now and skirmish around, and see whom I can get to go with us. I think there are a few men, and some friendly Indians they can dispense with, and I know they will not hesitate to go with Désiré d’Albert when there is an adventure on hand.”

Pierre took off his hunting jacket, and hung it over a chair to dry. He began to talk encouragingly to Babette in his boyish way, promising almost

miracles for Uncle Désiré's accomplishing. She looked at the boy. At first she had been so occupied in pouring out her woes, and later in thanking and blessing Monsieur, that she had paid but slight attention to him. Now somewhat quieted, she was minded to ask him — as he had not been long from the mother country — about her own France; also if he had heard anything of her master and mistress. Pierre knew nothing of them, but told her all the news he could call to mind. He told her of the persecution of the Huguenots, who had not been able to leave France. He spoke about himself and his old life, all in her own tongue, which fairly delighted the old dame. She listened eagerly, drinking in every word coming from his lips. In her intensity, she placed a hand caressingly on his shoulder. Pierre smelt something burning, and, being rather too near the fire, quickly stepped forward to get out of its range. Babette's hand slipped from his shoulder, and was caught in a beaded chain which he wore about his neck — such an one as the Indians make and wear. Fastened to the end of the chain was a little painted miniature, and this was pulled with a jerk from the pocket of his woollen shirt. Before Babette could get her hand disentangled, her eyes caught sight of the miniature.

"*Mon Dieu !*" she shrieked, grasping it. "*Mon Dieu !*"

"What is it?" asked he; "did you hurt yourself? Oh, the portrait. Do you know it?"

"Know it! Where did you find it?"

"We did n't find it," he answered. "Uncle Désiré took it from an Indian. He wore it strung around his neck, the portrait out so. He evidently did n't know the value of it; 't was the glitter of the stones that pleased him. He was quite satisfied to take some shining beads and a brass medallion for it. Was n't he, Uncle Désiré?" and Pierre appealed to Monsieur.

"Well, well, my good woman, what is it?" asked Monsieur d'Albert of Babette; "what is it?" He had stopped at the door a moment to chat with Vrouw Van der Hoef, and now he looked both curiously and anxiously at Babette, who stood as if stricken dumb, the miniature again in her hands.

"*Mon Dieu !* She is dead!" at last she said, solemnly.

"Dead! Whom do you mean?" said Monsieur.

"Margot Dantier. It was hers."

"Hers? Little Majesty Two-shoes'?"

"Yes. She always carried it. Her mother gave

it to her in France before she left home. She would have died before she would have parted with it. She has been killed for the jewels!"

"Come, come, 'tis not so easy to die," said Monsieur, severely.

"She is dead," reiterated the old nurse. "There is nothing for thee to do now but find her body where it lies, and bring it home. Home—she has no home! But bring it to her old Babette, so that she can bury her where her poor mother may at least look upon her grave." The woman's face became as a carved image. It was as if the positive thought that her nursling was dead—perhaps horribly murdered—had dried up all her tears. Suddenly she turned upon Monsieur d'Albert in a fury.

"Why didst thou not make him tell thee where she was?" she cried. "Couldst not see the resemblance, and the name upon the back? Thou, a great man, to let him escape thee like that! Ah me! ah me! Why did we come to this heathenish land, where we have no friends—no friends?"

Monsieur paid no heed to her ravings, but took the miniature and looked carefully at it. Yes, of course he saw the resemblance, now that his attention was called to it. He turned it over in his hand. He shrugged his shoulders when he saw in tiny

letters on the back of the golden frame "Louis de la Dantier 1581."

"Pierre, learn a lesson," he said, as he passed it back to him; "never neglect anything, however small. 'Tis the first time Désiré d'Albert was ever guilty of carelessness. No, good Babette, I paid little attention to it. I am sorry. Had I seen the likeness to the child, I should still have believed the Indian, since I had no idea of the child's being anywhere but safe and sound with you. I have always found Meshinauwa a well-meaning Indian. If he is above the ground, I shall find him, and there will not be much hidden from me when I shall have finished with him. He will be pumped drier than ever well was in a dry springtime." After a slight pause he added, in a gentle voice, as he looked kindly at the distressed nurse, "I swear, Dame, by the shades of my ancestors, that I will bring her back, alive if possible. If that be beyond me, then wrapped in her tiny shroud; or never shall you look upon my face again."

He hurried from the room, leaving its occupants in tears; even Babette was again weeping.

It was but a few hours before he was back. Pierre had hardly had time to finish the substantial meal Vrouw Van der Hoef had prepared for him. With

Monsieur were a few men and some Indians, hardy fellows, tried and true.

As they waited a moment at the open door, bidding the women good-bye, a group of wide-eyed children, who had left their sport, surrounded them. They watched with curiosity the men who were to bring Little Majesty Two-shoes back to them. Among the children was a tiny maid whose cheeks were like roses, and she stood with her finger in her mouth, eyeing the men intently. As she saw them about to depart, she ran to Monsieur d'Albert, and clasped her arms about his legs (so small was she beside the tall man) and stopped him.

"Lift me up," she said. When he did so, for he was always gentle to little ones, she continued: "Give her this" — she kissed him with a hearty smack — "and tell her to hurry back, we miss her so, dear Majesty Two-shoes. Don't let any one harm her, we love her so."

"So we do, so we do," shouted the heretofore silent children, made brave by one little lass.

"And so I shall tell her, when I meet her," Monsieur said, addressing the crowd of children. Of the little one he held in his arms he made inquiry:

"What is your name, that I may say who sent the kiss?"

"I am little Mary Keetle," she lisped.

"Here is a kiss for your own bonny self, little Mary Keetle," he said, as he kissed her. "You are a brave lass." And he put her down.

Shrill voices then made the welkin ring with three cheers for Monsieur d'Albert. And down the street they marched, Monsieur and Pierre leading the way, followed to the outskirts of the town by old Babette and the larger boys and girls. Here they halted for a moment, while Monsieur ordered the children back to town, and told Babette to see that they loitered not on the way, else there might be more anxious women. Babette promised to do so, while calling down manifold blessings on his head. This Monsieur put an end to by grimly giving the order to march. One lad took off his shoe and threw it after them, as a token of good luck.

Chapter XVIII

I CARRY A TALISMAN



ARCHING all day through forests covered with snow, making camp at night and often before making it clearing the place, even felling trees, was not such easy work, perhaps, as Master Pierre had imagined. But he was a sturdy lad, as lads were mostly in those days, and there was a great deal of it that was delightful to him. He liked the foraging for food, the meetings with the Indians (and the wish always stirred Pierre that they would be hostile, so there might be a fight), the living close to Nature, and watching the quickening of her minutest creatures, the rest after a day's hard marching, and the yarns the men spun about the camp fire at night, so thrilling and wonderful, of their adventures by land and sea. Wonderful indeed! Perhaps some drew upon their imagination rather than upon facts. None were so thrilling or so strange as the travels of Uncle Désiré. He had

been East and West, North and South, even down the Mississippi, and knew many different tribes of Indians. But his tales were not only about America, but other countries as well. He was a great traveller and explorer.

They had been a month or more on their trip. It was slow work going from one Indian settlement to another in wintry weather. They had found only a few old squaws when they had come to Kwasind's country. He was not there. They learned that he had joined another tribe and gone upon the war path, and that he was not expected to return until the following summer. They had been no more successful in finding Meshinauwa; therefore Monsieur had given up all hope of seeing them for the present, and was making his way steadily northward, hoping against hope that the child might have been taken there. They were now not far from Canada.

A thaw had set in the night before—it was the final breaking up of the winter—and the men, walking through the slush and mud, found life was not rose-colored. Still, there was no grumbling since Désiré d'Albert set all he commanded a good example; the harder things became, the more cheerful he was. An old saying of his was: "Old

man Grawl never yet accomplished anything, and a cheerful way makes all things smooth."

"Well, my boy, how do you like this life?" he asked Pierre, who was slouching along, every little while stopping to knock off the mud which stuck to his boots, by giving a quick backward kick. "Are you still hankering to be an explorer?"

"Why, yes, I do like it, Uncle Désiré," Pierre answered, in an eager voice. "It is a trifle hard at times," and he heaved a sigh as he noticed the mud again heaping about his boots that but now he had knocked off; "but I enjoy the outdoor life with all its sports and dangers."

"But you hate its annoyances, hey?" interrupted Uncle Désiré.

"No doubt about that," said the boy, with a half-ashamed laugh. "Then it is so new!"

"That's it — it's new," Uncle Désiré said, with a smile; "it is new. Perhaps when it grows an old thing it will not be so agreeable to you. To me it never grows old — it has a perennial fascination; nothing can take its pleasure away, cold, hunger, or danger. I'm afraid it will be the same with you. 'Tis in the blood, this liking for a nomadic life; and when it is, it is almost impossible to sit down and feel comfortable under any surroundings, how-

ever domestic and delightful." A smile crossed his face as he continued in a teasing tone: "Are n't you afraid some unfriendly Indians may surprise us some day, and before you can say Jack Robinson adorn their belts with our scalps?"

"Not with you, Uncle Désiré, not with you," answered Pierre, with confidence; "I never think of such a thing happening. Anyway, we could whip them, I am sure. Besides, I carry a talisman." This last was said in a low tone, so low that his uncle hardly caught it.

"A talisman!" Uncle Désiré repeated. "Surely you are not superstitious; leave that to old women and sailors."

"No, I am not superstitious — exactly — only I have a feeling if I carry this —" and Pierre slapped his pocket energetically — "that I shall never be harmed."

"Hah! hah!" laughed Uncle Désiré. "Oh, for the days of youth! What is your talisman, Pierre?"

"I shall tell you and let you see it when we reach the camp, if you will not make fun of it."

"Very well. Now let us step cautiously along here. It is just as well, for there may be Iroquois lurking about, and their feeling is not particularly

pleasant toward the French. Although I consider myself neutral, they may forget."

They followed one another silently but quickly for an hour or more; not even the quivering of a branch or the winging of a bird escaped the eagle eyes of Monsieur Désiré d'Albert.

Night throwing its dark mantle over the world, and there being no sign of hostile persons about, they hewed some dead branches down from the trees, gathered some dry twigs and bracken, and soon had a roaring fire made and a snug camp fixed for the night.

A piece of bear's meat was hissing and sputtering over the flame, that, together with the other provisions, an Indian had carried on his back. When all were refreshed, they made merry in a quiet way around the camp fire. Désiré d'Albert, although a foe to solemnity, was before all a cautious man, hence his great success among the Indians.

After the men had told a few tales and even hummed a jolly tune or so, Monsieur Désiré d'Albert said:

"Now, Pierre, show your talisman. As it has such great powers, I may be tempted to get one like it. In this country of dangers ever near, it is well to have a talisman."

"Oh, come, Uncle Désiré, if you are going to make fun of it I had best hide it in my pocket," replied Pierre.

"There, Pierre, take no offence where none is meant. It is your time to tell a yarn; out with it."

"I will, only do not laugh at it," he said, feeling all a boy's dislike at being made fun of; and he took from his pocket a small package in rather a shame-faced sort of way, and unwrapped it. "*Voilà tout.*" There in the hollow of his hand lay a golden curl, twisted about a louis-d'or.

"'T is pretty enough and golden enough, heaven knows," he said, as he took the curl from him, and twined it lightly around his finger. "A curl from the head of a lady love — fie! Pierre, you are commencing young, I see."

"Why no, Uncle Désiré, nothing of the sort. It belonged to a child I never even saw."

"What, no romance after all? Pierre, your story, I'm afraid, will be disappointing. Where does its virtue come in?"

"I will tell you. I found it, and thereby hangs a tale. From the first I had a feeling that if I carried it nothing could harm me — that it would protect me from all evil. Perhaps it is foolish —"

"Foolish! Well, I should say so," interrupted

Désiré d'Albert, stifling a yawn. "Rather like the old woman's stone with a hole in it. Well, tell your tale."

"Not so; rather like a relic from some saint, as coming from one so good and so unfortunate," said Pierre, sharply. "But I will tell you. You know Captain Maurtaille, my godfather, who wrote you asking what he should do with me, as there was so much trouble over the Huguenots, and I being one by descent?"

"Yes, indeed. He was getting a little afraid, and with reason, since he is in the King's service and numbers so many friends among the Protestants. He should be neutral, as I am, in all things; 't is the easiest way. Had I known before I left, I could have brought you over with me then. Well?"

"We were only waiting a favorable opportunity when it should be convenient for me to come to you. One day the captain was sent to inspect some boats at Havre, and he took me with him. On the way my horse became frightened, and threw me, cut his knee badly, and knocked me up considerably. It happened in front of an old hut, the door of which the captain kicked open, and we entered. It was vacant. He sat down, and while I got my breath, he bound up the cut in my head. Suddenly

Captain Maurtaille jumped up and exclaimed: 'Well, if this isn't my own hut! I had forgotten for a moment where we were. Over yonder lies Castle D'oën, which is part of an old estate that belonged to my mother. The castle was burnt down and never rebuilt.' "

"Yes," interrupted Monsieur, "I remember it well. As boys, your godfather and I played together in that old house. *Eh bien!*" and a half smile played over his features at the reminiscence of some boyish prank, perhaps; "your story improves."

"Then," said Pierre, "he told me to go and look in an old locker which stood in the corner of the room, and see if there was anything in it. I went and found that." He pointed to the long curl, which Uncle Désiré was dancing up and down its golden length, letting the firelight play upon it, turning it to copper color. "I brought it to him, and he seemed much affected by it. For a while I could get nothing from him. Then he told me that it belonged to a child — the child of some very dear friends of his, and that her parents were in prison. It seems that, as they were making their way to a ship ready to sail for America, they had been arrested and taken in custody. He had not been able as yet to reach them, although he had

done everything in his power to assist them. As for the child, it was probable that she was in America, as he had helped her to escape. He had even put in the locker a suit of boy's clothes, in case she should be followed and need them. He thought she must have worn them, since they were missing and the coin and curl left as payment. Of course she did not know that they had been left for her. He gave me the louis-d'or piece, but kept half of the curl. He said it should be a talisman to me. He would not tell me the name of the child, although I begged ever so hard. Only he said he loved her as his own, and that she was beautiful, and as good as beautiful. He fretted greatly for fear something had happened to her, and that he had done wrong in separating her from her parents."

"Did the child come over alone? Was there no one with her?" asked Monsieur.

"I believe he told about a nurse — I am not sure. He was very reticent."

Désiré d'Albert smiled a rather queer smile as he said:

"There, take back your curl, Pierre. It is very pretty; and besides having such preventive powers, as you say, it might tempt me to keep it."

Pierre took his talisman, merely saying, "I hope

I shall meet her, and perhaps I may some day, as she is in America."

"O Pierre, you little know the extent of this America. But perhaps you may, who knows?" Another smile, hardly noticeable, crossed Uncle Désiré's face. "Stranger things have happened even than that in this vast America. Now to sleep. We have a hard day's work for to-morrow if we would reach Canada by nightfall. It is your watch the first quarter; be sure you do not drop asleep." And he wrapped himself in his blanket, while the others who had not grown weary of Pierre's narrative and gone to sleep long ago proceeded to follow his example. Soon they were all asleep except Pierre, and they lay in a circle around the fire, with their feet stretched toward it.

Chapter XIX

NEPTUNE



OW still the night was! Not a leaf rustled on the trees or a dead twig snapped and fell to the ground but it sounded harshly in the stillness. Perhaps a man sighed in his sleep and turned him over; or one sleeping on his back, dreaming of some peril, gave out a snort that would wake him up, and, after a muttered adjective, turn over and sleep again. But mostly they slept heavily, peacefully.

Pierre sat with his knees touching his chin, holding his talisman and looking at it. After a time he wrapped it up and put it back into his pocket again. He got up and yawned an ear-to-ear yawn, then stretched himself by thrusting out first one arm and then the other to their fullest length and drawing them back again. He threw on more fagots from the pile near at hand, as he gently paced up and down to limber his legs, cramped from sitting still so long. Presently he sat down

again (the watch seemed long), and looked into the fire, as if trying to read something in its red embers. What would he do if by chance he should see off yonder a pack of wolves? He glanced furtively out into an open space between gaunt trees, and here and there an oak that still wore its brown dress. He thought of the *loup-garou* stories that his old nurse had oft hushed his whimpering with when a child; and he threw on another piece of wood, which made the flame leap up and throw out red and yellow sparks. His eyes sought the lightening space — and he looked into two bright eyes. Fascinated, he watched those eyes. They came nearer and nearer — they gleamed yellow as topaz in the dark. To what belonged the eyes? Was it an Indian, creeping stealthily on them? Was it a wolf or a bear?

“A bear undoubtedly,” Pierre said to himself. “I will kill it, and to me will belong the credit.” He poised his gun and took sure aim. Something — he knew not what it was — made him hesitate; he could not bring himself to shoot.

“What is it?” he muttered, as he lowered his gun.

“A dog, I think,” said one near him — Uncle Désiré, who had awakened, and for the last few

minutes had been watching the approach of the thing with curiosity beside Pierre, unconscious of his nearness.

Hearing them speak, the dog (for dog it was) stood still, and for one second looked as if he would turn tail and slink away. But Désiré d'Albert had a clear, penetrating voice that carried far, and he called him. The dog came, but with reluctance. He was timid, and did not seem to have much faith in humanity. He did not look unlike a bear indeed, for he was a large St. Bernard. His coat was matted and torn. He was a disreputable-looking object. About his neck hung the remnant of a rope, with which he had evidently been tied.

The rest of the party, now aroused, crowded about him. Monsieur looked critically at him, while the men talked dog lore over him, and spoke of his points, and wondered whence he had come.

"Good dog! Poor fellow, he is hungry and worn out," said Monsieur; "see his paws, they are cut to pieces. Here, Pierre, get me that bear grease, and let's fix him up a bit."

While he worked over the dog's cuts, he spoke in a caressing way to him, and the dog responded in the usual canine manner by licking the hands tending to his hurts, and wagging his tail.

"Neptune, is your name Neptune?" he asked. The dog manifested such delight that no one that saw him but knew he wanted to express joy at his quick recognition. "I thought so. There are not many dogs like you in America, I'll venture to say." Then Monsieur turned to them and said, "We have accomplished one thing (Providence or good luck has helped us), for this is Margot Dantier's dog, that has come so mysteriously to us."

"Is it, indeed?" they asked, and looked at the dog with even greater curiosity.

"Yes, and the poor beast looks as if he had been having a hard time of it. I wonder where he has come from—I do not believe he would have left the child"; and there entered for the first time a great fear in Monsieur's heart that Babette might be right, and that the child was dead.

"Pierre, let me take the miniature and see if he recognizes it."

Pierre held it out to the dog. He first smelt of it, and then, throwing up his head, lifted his eyes to Monsieur and howled dismally.

"Poor fellow, where is she?" Only another howl from Neptune, for Neptune it really was.

"Well, Pierre, take care of it," said Uncle Désiré,

as he gave the miniature back to Pierre. "I'm glad we brought it with us."

"Oh, the poor beast," said Pierre, watching him eating. "If he could only speak, what news he could tell. He is really trying to tell us something." Indeed, the dog went from one to the other of the men, except the Indians—they he shunned—and whined, as if appealing to them.

"Neptune, you shall stay with us. Let us hope your troubles are over for the time at least," said Pierre.

While they ate their breakfast, which one of the men had hastily prepared, for the night was past, and the sun gilding the tops of the trees, Désiré d'Albert told them how Neptune had been found drifting at sea. He finished by saying:

"Could he relate his experiences, it would fill a volume, no doubt, and be good reading, too."

Soon they broke camp and went on, anxious to reach Canada, so as to learn whether the child was there, or if they had come so many miles for naught.

Chapter XX

MESHINAUWA



FTER he had comfortably housed his companions at a friend's, Désiré d'Albert dressed himself in his best, with all his gayest trappings, — black satin breeches, embroidered waistcoat, velvet coat, cravat, and ruffles of fine mechlin lace, periwig, patches and all. He was now Monsieur d'Albert, Chevalier de Farneisay of the court of Louis XIV., where men followed the fashions of the day. He and Pierre, who was dressed equally carefully, then went ostensibly to pay their respects to the governor, but really to find out all they could about Margot Dantier.

At once they were admitted to the governor's presence, for all doors were thrown open to Monsieur d'Albert, Chevalier de Farneisay. He received a courteous welcome back to Canada, and many questions were asked him about his explorations, all of which he answered as well as his impatience would permit. He was rather reticent about his last visit

to Paris, not knowing what message King Louis might have sent regarding himself. The governor made no allusion to it, however, so Monsieur supposed the choler of the King had fumed itself away.

As soon as he could without abruptness he said :

“My dear Governor, I want your help. I am trying to find the whereabouts of a child stolen from New York by some Canadian Indians, and I think brought here for a ransom. The child’s name is Margot Dantier.”

The governor was most solicitous in his desire to help him. He sent for his list of names of all the prisoners bought and sold within the year. Her name was not on it.

“Margot Dantier, did you say ? ” he asked ; and when Monsieur had answered “ Yes,” he began to tell of a lady of that name who had just come over from France.

“*Mon Dieu !*” Monsieur exclaimed. “Is she really here ? Well, it is the unexpected that happens, after all.”

“Certainly, there is a lady here bearing that name. She has been here now about a month and is only waiting for her husband, who is expected by the next ship, when they are both to be sent to the colonies of Maryland, if his Majesty do not change

his mind by that time, which would be no rare thing. They are Huguenots, but through the King's clemency are allowed to go free, and were even given passports."

He did not explain that *Sieur Dantier* had bought his freedom, after great trouble and the imprisonment of both *Madame Dantier* and himself, by the giving up of all his immense wealth (it was supposed) to the King. But there was a goodly portion left of which the Crown knew nothing, and which *Babette* had taken on board the "*Willing Bark*," and it was now safe in the spare room at *Vrouw Van der Hoef's*, waiting the arrival of *Sieur Dantier*.

"Shall I send for *Madame Dantier*?" asked the governor.

"Yes, if you will be so kind," answered *Monsieur*. "It is no doubt her child that I am searching for, but not a word to her about the child's being lost. I expect to find her, if alive, before many days; if not, I shall know what has become of her, if I have to go to the North Pole to find out."

"I hope it will not come to that. We should like to keep you with us for a time. But I will bring *Madame*." So saying, he left the room, and soon returned with his wife and another lady, *Madame Dantier*.

Monsieur and Pierre were both cordially greeted by the governor's wife and presented to Madame Dantier. Pierre chatted gayly with the governor's lady, who was teasing him about not staying in Canada, the gayest place in the New World; indeed, a second Versailles, she said, instead of gallivanting about the country with his uncle. And he was trying in vain to make her see the beauties of the life he was leading, travelling about with Uncle Désiré.

Désiré d'Albert looked at Madame Dantier, and saw only too plainly the sadness in her gentle face, and he felt half angry, wholly dismayed, at his inability heretofore to find her child. They spoke of this new country, and she asked many questions concerning it. The thought of her child was ever at her heart, yet she dreaded to frame the words on her lips, lest she hear sad things concerning her.

"Monsieur, thou art a great traveller, so I suppose thou hast been to Maryland?" at last she asked.

"Yes, Madame, I have been there many times," he replied.

"Dost thou know the Dantiers who live there, and if my daughter Margot reached them in safety?"

"She did not go as far as that, Madame. I met your child the day she stepped from the good ship that bore her to America."

“Didst thou, indeed, and stood she the trip well?” she asked, a great longing within her to hear of her child. When he answered her and told her he had seen her well, she continued: “Ah, I have fretted my heart out with the thought that we had not done right to let her come such a distance with only old Babette. Night after night I dream of them both; always I see Margot alive, but sad — sad. I know she is in the land of the living, I am sure of it — I feel it in my heart; but time and again the thought comes — in this strange New World there may be a worse fate than death.”

“Madame, I hope you may find her safe and well,” and a frown crossed Monsieur’s brow.

“It will not be long before I see her now; I count the days until Sieur Dantier arrives, and we can go to her.”

Monsieur stood negligently leaning against a large window which overlooked the court, when on a sudden he turned and, sweeping the ladies a low bow, as he murmured an adieu, abruptly left them. They listened to his rapid footsteps as he ran down the stairs, even in his haste jumping over some, and he was out into the street before the occupants of the room had recovered from their surprise.

As for Pierre, knowing his uncle full well, he laughed, and the others joined him in his merriment. Their curiosity aroused, they crowded to the window and looked out. They saw Monsieur accost an Indian in no very gentle manner, and walk off with him.

Yes, it was an Indian; in fact, Meshinauwa. Monsieur had seen him from the window, and nothing would make him run any risk of losing the subtle creature; for Indians are like rabbits, burrowing in deep places, and hard to catch unless you set a trap for them.

"So, so, my friend, not so fast," he said to Meshinauwa, in a quiet tone, the more quiet because he was so excited. "You were going to escape me again, were you?"

"No, no; I no go. What you want?" he said, sullenly.

"It will not take me long to tell you what I want. Where is the child from whom you stole the miniature I took from you? What did you do with her?"

"I do her no harm."

"*En voilà assez.* But where is the child? Where did you take her? Come, out with it; if you have done her no harm, no harm comes to you. Let us

sit down here, where we can talk more at our ease." As he spoke, Désiré d'Albert drew him down on the stoop in the shadow of a house.

"I tell you." And so he did, beginning at the time when Margot and her dog came into the camp where he was, down to the day they had left her unconscious, perhaps dead, at the hut of Simon Fargè. He finished his tale, to which Monsieur, with a black frown on his face, listened, with these words:

"I good to her — she die if it were not for me, long ago. I carry her days and days on my back. If she die, I no help it."

"You cur! Why did you not tell me about her the day when I took the miniature from you? It could not have been many days since you left her."

"Kwasind, he say no tell."

"What is Kwasind, that you should mind him?"

"Kwasind Great Chief."

"Not so great as the White Father's friend is, and so you shall find to your cost if the child is dead or harmed. Come, I will give you a chance to prove your words true. We will go to this Simon's Fargè's hut."

And together they walked off down the beaten path which led to Simon's home.

Chapter XXI

FAIRY TALES



ABOUT this time Margot was sitting on her stool by Simon's knee in her favorite attitude, — chin leaning on her hands, — watching him work and chatting with him.

The house was tidied up and in perfect order. On a table by the window, which was open, for the air was bland and pleasant, there stood a pot with a wild anemone growing in it. Simon, on coming through the woods, from gathering shoes to be patched, had seen its leaves sticking out from the snow (for winter yet held all the land in her icy bands), and he had dug it up and brought it home to his dear miss. She had watched and cared for it, until now it was sending out its blossoms in great profusion.

This playing at housekeeping was fun to Little Majesty Two-shoes. She insisted upon doing her part of the work, and loved dearly to brush up the hearth and wipe the dishes. Simon and she

always disputed as to who should make the beds, for he did not want the idolized child—his dear miss—to do anything but play and read the few books which Father Andree, a good, kind priest, brought her. He was almost the only person who had seen the child since she had been with Simon. He had not been able to question Meshinauwa as he had wished, for he had not come near him; no doubt the fear of learning of her death stayed him. As for Winka, being somewhat of a rascal, he had taken himself off, nobody seemed to know or care where. Therefore Simon had learned nothing of the little miss whom he had bought, nothing of her past life, except that she must be French, since she both spoke and read it easily.

Father Andree advised Simon to keep her quiet and secluded for a time, and see if good food, rest, and contentment would not bring back her memory. I think he saw the hunger in Simon's heart for the companionship of a little child, or perhaps, seeing no scapular hanging about Margot's neck such as all good Catholic mothers put upon their children to protect them from evil, he hoped in time to make her a convert to his church. Or perhaps, thinking it was only one of the many cases of stolen children, he considered that she was quite as well off in

Simon's care as anywhere else. All of which was exactly in accordance with Simon's way of thinking.

She looked healthful, sweet, and clean, and she was dressed in a simple white frock, which had belonged to Simon's child. She was saying:

"Simon, hast ever heard any fairy tales?"

"Yes, Little Majesty Two-shoes; I used to hear them at my mother's knee, when I was a slip of a boy."

"What were they about, good Simon?"

"Always about the *loup-garou*, the terrible werewolf. She was so bold at times that she would enter the cottages of the villagers and take the sleeping babe from its cradle, beneath the very noses of the family, and carry it off to the woods."

"Did it not frighten thee to hear such tales when thou wast so little?"

"Frighten me! I was oft blue with fright, and my skin puckered like a goose's. When, after the telling of those tales, I was told to climb the little ladder which led to the loft where I slept with my brothers, my knees knocked so together I have since wondered how I managed to climb at all."

"Didst ever hear any about good fairies, Simon?"

"Not many; these tales were told not to entertain us, — my parents were poor, and had not time for



“HAST EVER HEARD ANY FAIRY TALES?”

that — but to frighten us into being good and more diligent. When we had idled, or had not gathered the desired amount of hazel nuts from the woods, nor brought in a huge pile of fagots for the winter time, then the tales that night were more fearsome, and sent us to bed quaking.”

“Poor Simon, thou must have worked hard when thou wast little.”

“Hard enough; but, little miss, work never hurt any one, I think.”

“Dost thou believe in fairies, Simon?”

“Well, perhaps I do and perhaps I do not. Sometimes I do believe they are about, and tie knots in my thread for very mischief, especially when I am in a hurry.”

“Yes, the gnomes. Didst ever hear them laugh? Such a funny, tinkling laugh, like spilling water. If thou art patient, after working a long time, all at once the knot comes untied. If thou art impatient and lovest thy temper, the thread will tie itself up into a little ball. ’Tis the gnomes’ little fingers that do it, I am sure, and then thou hast to break it. The gnomes say ‘Ho! ho!’ in a gruff way then. Yes, Simon, I have heard them and watched thee.” She shook her finger at him, laughing merrily.

“Hah, hah,” laughed Simon, joining her. “I see

that I shall have to put a guard on my temper, now I have a Majesty Two-shoes to live with me. You must pardon old Simon, dear miss; he has been alone so long he grows old and careless."

"Thou dearest Simon!" she exclaimed, throwing her arms about his neck. "As if I did not know that thou art the kindest man in the world, and the very best. Even Father Andree is no better than thou art."

"Yes, he is much better. He spends all his time doing good, and praying for the wicked, and saying his beads. Simon does nothing."

"Simon does for me."

"Yes, but that is Simon's pleasure."

"Dost believe, Simon, that some good fairy will brush the cobwebs from my brain, so that some day — I wish it might be now — I could remember my name, and all the other things I have forgotten? Mother would say, 'Trust thou in God.'"

Simon, surprised at hearing her mention her mother, looked over the rim of his spectacles at her; but not wishing to startle her, he quietly said:

"Yes, God watches over us always, and your mother would know what was best."

"My mother! Where is she? Have I a mother?"

“I do not know. But why worry? It will all come right some day, no doubt; and until then, Simon shall be both father and mother to you.” He had hoped, yet dreaded, that the word “mother” would give her memory a jog, and set in motion a train of thoughts which might lead to something. He hoped for her sake, but dreaded for himself, as he well knew it would mean the giving up of his treasure. He saw how the big eyes clouded, that were a few moments ago brimming with mirth, and he said:

“Suppose I tell you one of my fairy tales.”

“Oh, wilt thou indeed?”

“Yes, certainly. Once upon a time —” Simon was destined never to finish that fairy tale, for at that moment there sounded a loud knocking at the door. It was pushed open with scant ceremony, and Monsieur d’Albert and an Indian walked in. They had been looking in at the window, listening to the talk between Simon and the child, and they could wait no longer.

“Simon Fargè, my friend, how do you do?” said Monsieur, shaking him by the hand, but never taking his glance off from the child, who had risen when they came into the room, and stood looking at them with a sweet, serious gaze. In her eyes there

was no light of recognition for either Monsieur or Meshinauwa.

“Who is the pretty maid, Simon?” asked Monsieur at length, for it was a great shock to him, the child’s lack of memory.

“Little Majesty Two-shoes,” she answered.

“Little Majesty Two-shoes is a very good name since I gave it to you myself, but I think Margot a better one; do not you? Margot Dantier is your rightful name.”

“Margot Dantier! Is Margot Dantier my name, really my name? I cannot remember anything — I have remembered nothing since I came to Simon.”

“No,” said Simon, softly; “we have forgotten all about our past life.”

Monsieur made one more effort, and said impressively:

“Here is Meshinauwa; try and see if you cannot recall him. He carried you days and days on his back, so he says.”

“No. Was he the Indian who brought me to you, Simon?”

“Yes, dear.”

Her face clouded over, and tears came into her eyes, as she shook her head at her inability to bring any part of her past to mind.

"I cannot remember — I cannot!" she muttered.

Simon took Monsieur aside and told him all he knew; how she must have suffered some terrible shock, and that she had been that way ever since she had been with him. He told him (he was jealous of his guardianship), and he could see it for himself, that she was perfectly well bodily, and that he hoped in time her memory would come back to her.

"Time is a laggard — we cannot wait for time," Monsieur said, impatiently. "Her mother is here, and I want to restore her child to her in as perfect a condition as when she left France."

Now it was Monsieur's turn to explain to Simon something of Margot's past life and who she was. When he heard that her father was of late Court shoemaker to the King, he understood many things. Monsieur also told him what he intended doing. He called Meshinauwa, to whom Margot was talking, and in a low voice gave him an order that sent him on a running trot from the hut.

Then, sitting down,—and he made a brave figure in all his splendor,—he talked quietly to Margot, while Simon took up his work again. He made himself so entertaining that Margot hitched her stool near and nearer him as she listened, enchanted.

While speaking, relating little anecdotes that had come under his observation, Monsieur had an ear open for a sound outside of the house. When he heard it (after some whispered words to Simon) he left them, telling Margot that he should come again.

Chapter XXII

"I REMEMBER"



HAT a wise man he is, Simon," said Margot. "I do believe he knows every animal in the world."

"Yes, 'every animal in the world,'" repeated Simon. He was so agitated that he hardly knew what he was either saying or doing. In order not to excite Margot, he kept on stitching the patch on the shoe, but, few as were the stitches he put in, they had all to come out next day, so zigzag were they.

Outside of the house, by the door, there stood a group quite as excited: Désiré d'Albert, Pierre, Meshinauwa, and Neptune. They were making ready to try an experiment. About Neptune's neck they fastened the miniature of Louis de la Dantier by its beaded chain, so that it should hang in a conspicuous place on his chest. When all was ready they opened the door, and, at a word of command, the dog walked in. He came in slowly, wonderingly, his nose in the air, sniffing at the strangeness of it

all. He heard Margot's voice — he stopped — then gave one wild leap at her and almost knocked her over. There was no mistaking the recognition in him.

Margot, recovering her equilibrium, said, with a laugh :

“Why, Simon, see this big dog! Is he not splendid? Nice old fellow.” She dropped on her knees at his side, no fear in her heart, and continued : “Why, he acts as if he knew me, does he not?” There was wonderment in her voice, for Neptune acted as if crazy with delight, and expressed it as an overgrown puppy might.

It was different with the men at the door; their faces expressed no delight, only a deep chagrin. They fancied that their experiment had failed — but only for a moment. Margot's eyes had caught sight of the miniature. She took it in her hands and looked at it, and then up into the dog's face. Like a flash of light — it was as if in answer to her prayers — the cobwebs were swept from her brain, and she remembered. The expression that came into her face was something beautiful to behold. It was like the meeting of lights in the milky way, the bursting of the sun cloud.

“Oh! oh! It is my own Neptune, and my own

miniature of the brave Louis de la Dantier!” she cried.

“ Thank God and the Virgin Mary,” said Simon, all of a tremble, and the tears ran down his wrinkled cheeks. “ Thank God,” echoed a voice at the door.

“ Thou dear, dear doggie, where hast thou been? Were they good to thee, my Neptune?” Then she stood up tall and straight. With eyes alight with excitement, she said : “ Now I remember everything, good Simon, everything. How that bad Indian brought me to Kwasind’s camp — how frightened I was, but I dared not show it — and there they kept me. Night after night, as I slept out in the open and watched the stars come out one by one, I peopled the woods about with fierce creatures, ready to rush upon me and devour me ; night after night, I cowered under my blanket, no one to comfort me — even God seemed a long way off — nothing but my miniature and Neptune. Then I lost my miniature, and after that, that wicked chief took my dog from me ; and it did hurt me so, and I was so tired, I seemed to fall into an awful blackness, and then I knew no more. But that dream, dost remember, that I had when I first came to thee? Why, Simon, it is n’t a dream at all — it is true. ’T is part of my old home life in dear Paris. My father is a shoemaker too,

cordonnier to the King. ‘Felix Dantier, *Cordonnier*,’ is printed on the sign that swings in front of our house at home. Those good men are his workmen, and it is dear old Jacques who looks like thee, and I am the little girl, for I had long curls when I was at home, but Babette cut them off before I crossed the sea in Captain Hezekiah Brown’s ship, the ‘Willing Bark.’ How long ago it seems!”

The people outside by the half-open door could not wait for her to relate any more reminiscences; they eagerly came in.

As soon as Margot saw Monsieur she ran to him, and said:

“*Ce bon homme*, thou art my dear friend Monsieur d’Albert, whom first I saw in the little hut near Havre, before we came to this country. I am so glad to see thee again. Simon and I have been alone so long.” But she added quickly, not wishing to slight her good Simon even for a moment: “It has been a happy time, though, has it not, Simon?”

“Happy indeed for me,” he answered.

“And here is Meshinauwa too. Ah, Monsieur, had it not been for him, I doubt me whether I should ever have lived to see this day. I was almost dead when Simon bought me for a bale of tobacco.”

“ Simon got you cheap enough, I think,” said Monsieur, with a laugh.

“ But they thought me dead — anyway, Meshinawwa is a good, kind Indian ; he was kind to me.”

The Indian gave a fleeting glance at Monsieur, and uttered a grunt. He caught not the words that Monsieur muttered under his mustache, something about its being well for him that it was so.

Margot looked at Pierre, who was regarding her with a smile, and said :

“ I do not know thee, do I ? ”

Pierre shook his head, and Monsieur made the rafters ring with his hearty laugh, as he interrupted : “ No more you do ; but I will introduce you. This is Pierre Dupont, my very good nephew, a rogue of a fellow, who carries a talisman — a golden curl. Why, it would about match yours in color, my Little Majesty Two-shoes.”

“ Uncle Désiré loves his joke,” said Pierre, as she looked inquiringly at him ; and he blushed even as a girl might over his face and up into the roots of his black hair. “ But I do not mind, and some day I will show it to you.”

“ Monsieur, hast seen my poor Babette ? Did she worry and miss me ? ”

“ She did indeed. But Margot, tell us how you

came to go to the Indian's camp, for surely with that dog to protect you, one Indian could not have taken you by force?"

"No! no! I went willingly. I did wrong, and God punished me for it. But I did so want to hear something of my mother, and he told me that Kwasind could tell me where she was and that he would bring me back, and I believed him. I made poor Neptune be good and come too, though he did n't want to go. Old fellow, didst thou?" And Margot gave the dog another loving pat.

"I see. How about your miniature — did you lose that?" he said, determined to learn everything.

"Meshinauwa said I did, but I don't see how I could have lost it. Did you find it?"

"No. Meshinauwa found it, so he says," — and he looked at the Indian keenly.

"But I asked Meshinauwa," she said, and then stopped. She realized that the glitter of the jewels had been too much for the Indian (lovers of bright, sparkling things as all Indians are), and she would not tell on him. She reasoned that much should be forgiven one who had been as kind as he had been to her. In the slight interval of silence which followed, Meshinauwa stood like a bronze figure,

looking ahead apparently at nothing, bearing the scrutiny of the many eyes without turning a hair. How differently those eyes looked at him! And each saw a different person. Monsieur's eyes were hard and threatening, although a little ironical smile played about their corners, and he saw only one of the many obstacles which must be pushed back, cowed, crushed if need be, to make way for the flood of people rushing to the New World. Pierre's eyes were bright with excitement, and they saw in him only an Indian who might have stood just so while waiting for the torture of the stake. Simon's eyes were alight with love, genuine brother love, the love for all creatures born of woman, and they saw only a poor Indian, one of the many to be pushed from their homes, cajoled and cheated by the civilized invaders. Margot's eyes were wet with pity, and they saw her friend, her good friend who had carried her days and days upon his broad back. She broke the silence, which was becoming strained, by saying:

“ It does not matter about the miniature, now that I have it again, does it? I am sure if Meshinauwa said that he found it, it must be so.” She gave him a sweet smile.

“ Well,” said Monsieur, “ we'll let that pass.” If

an Indian's face ever changed, Meshinauwa's certainly expressed relief.

"Margot, do you remember what I said I would do for the sake of those bright eyes of yours, when I saw you at Vrouw Van der Hoef's?"

"My mother," she said solemnly, "my mother! Hast found her?"

"Come, let us go to the governor's house and see if there is not some one there whom you know."

"*Mon petit bon Dieu*, I do believe it is my mother! I do believe it is!" But Monsieur would tell her nothing more.

Soon an excited child was tripping along between Monsieur d'Albert and his nephew Pierre; her feet seemed to skim the ground. She talked blithely first to one and then the other. Neptune trotted on ahead, running back every now and then to see if his mistress followed.

Chapter XXIII

BEAUTY SHOULD GO BEAUTIFULLY



HEN Madame Dantier saw a tall child coming down the street with Monsieur d'Albert, Pierre, and a large dog, she looked with common curiosity at them, but without a great amount of interest. Perhaps what struck her as odd was that the child had on the simple scant frock, cap, girdle, and jacket such as the Normandy peasantry wear, and she smiled at seeing, as it were, a bit of the old country set down in this wilderness. Now Pierre but a few hours before, receiving a message, had left their presence with the profoundest air of mystery sitting strangely on his boyish face; still she did not think it had any bearing upon herself. As they came nearer, while yet scanning carelessly the gay group (for gay they were, merrily laughing at some antic of the dog), she let out a stifling cry, and she too rushed from the room and ran down the broad stairs, the second one that day.

She was out into the street like a flash, and her child was in her arms.

The governor's wife in mild wonder looked from the window, and then she knew that the mother had found her child. Her eyes took in the child — her clothes, her beauty; clothes were always an important item in Madame's life. Her lips curled into "How *bourgeoise*!" but the next moment they murmured, "How lovely!" Madame the governor's lady was a gay, fashionable woman, who often found life in Canada irksome, although it was really a mimic representation of the life at Court, and there were enough tragedies happening to please the most excitement-loving person. She now gave a little laugh of anticipation, as she thought that to her would fall the pleasure of dressing Margot in the garments which befitted her station. She hailed with delight the coming of the child, inasmuch as it would give her a moment's excitement in raking and scraping together a toilet suitable to her beauty. After welcoming Margot, she too flitted from the room, an errand in view. Her errand was among her ladies who had children, and soon she found all she needed. Then, while the mother and her child sat talking of their common joys and adventures, she returned and begged the loan of Margot for a

few moments. Madame Dantier hated to let her child go from her side even for an instant. One moment she clasped her to her breast, and the next held her off, saying: "How thou hast grown! Truly, Little Majesty Two-shoes is a misnomer, thou art so tall; we must leave off the Little." But she yielded to Madame's entreaties, and Margot left the room with the governor's lady. While she was gone, Monsieur told Madame Dantier of Margot and her adventure, which had all happened to her through her intense desire to learn of her mother. He spoke of her beauty and lovely ways, which had won her such faithful friends; of Simon and Meshinauwa; but of himself he said little. That little was enough to enable Madame to understand to whom she owed her child's return. She poured forth her thanks in tears and gracious words, and Meshinauwa and Simon came in for their share of praise.

When the two, who had left the room but a short time, returned, there was a great change in Margot as far as outward appearance went. She was dressed in an exquisite gown of soft, clinging material, embroidered in gold. Madame had either had it tucked away or had borrowed it from some one of the ladies of the fort, I know not which, only that it was beautiful. Margot's hair was piled on

the top of her head, yet fell in ringlets about her neck, in imitation of the older folk, and she looked like a diminutive grand dame. On her feet were two tiny red slippers.

They laughed a laughter with tears in it when Madame said :

“ There, she will do now until she can get her own clothes, and beauty should go beautifully. Little Majesty Two-shoes should always wear pretty shoes. Those were made in the workshop of the great shoemaker, *Sieur Dantier*. ”

“ Madame, ” said Monsieur, making the governor’s lady a low bow, “ to you belongs the palm. You have given the jewel a beautiful setting. ”

“ I quite agree with Madame, ” said Pierre, making a bow the exact counterpart of *Uncle Désiré’s*, “ that ‘ beauty should go beautifully. ’ ”

Margot looked from one to the other, and then said gravely :

“ It is indeed a beautiful frock. ”

A smile passed over their faces at her words, and her mother thought she looked equally lovely in either frock, but she thanked the governor’s wife for her trouble in a few gracious words.

The talk now naturally turned to Simon. They all wondered at the strangeness of fate that should

have brought the mother and child to the same place and yet should have kept them from meeting.

Madame wished to go at once and see this good man and his humble home, where Margot had passed so many tranquil days. Her heart was overflowing with thanksgiving, and she wished to express something of what she felt to this good man. So they set out for Simon's hut, and Margot ran on ahead to tell him the 'good news.

"Simon! Simon!" she cried, ere she had reached the door. "O dear Simon, such news, such news!" and she threw her arms about his neck. "Dost know, dost know, that I have seen my mother? And she is coming, coming to see thee."

"There, there, dear miss, you will blacken your pretty dress."

"Dost think I care about the frock? It is not mine at all; it belongs to the governor's wife. Art not glad my mother is come?"

"I am glad indeed for you."

"Oh! thou art a bad Simon, thou hast been crying! O Simon!" There was great reproach in Margot's voice, and she was ready to cry herself.

"Crying! Tut, tut, Simon's eyes are weak, that is all. But what shall Simon do with this untidy house? He will be so ashamed before those fine

ladies." And he jumped up and, throwing his bench into a corner, began to brush up the already scrupulously clean hearth.

"Untidy! Why, it is as clean as a pin," she said, reproachfully. Had she not herself tidied it up that morning?

There was not time for much brushing up, and Simon was not quick enough to whisk off his leather apron before the room was filled with the happy throng.

Madame went to him, took his toil-stained hand in hers and kissed it, while tears stood in her eyes. Simon felt ashamed at such praise — unwarranted praise it seemed to him. His face was red, and all he could say was, "I did nothing, I did nothing."

"Didst thou not buy her for a bale of tobacco?" asked Madame, with a smile.

"Ah, there it is. If I had not done so, perhaps you would have seen your child sooner."

"Blame not thyself for that — she might have been left in an Indian wigwam to pine and die. Thank God that thou sawest her."

"Little Majesty Two-shoes, you were a cheap bargain," said Monsieur.

"Not so cheap, perhaps, as thou thinkest. On the little slip of paper tucked away in the drawer of the

table it is said that a ransom shall be paid when my parents are found."

"And gladly will it be paid," put in Madame.

Then Madame had a long, earnest talk with Simon in a quiet corner. When she learned that there were no ties that bound him to Canada, save two lonely graves upon the hillside, she insisted that he should go with them, and hereafter consider himself one of their family. Simon readily consented, and he was overjoyed at the prospect of always being near his dear miss. He thought how needless had been his fears; how he had spent the time of Margot's absence in bewailing his lot in having to give up his treasure, and again in chiding himself for being so selfish as to want to keep so lovely a child in his mean hut, with no one but himself to guard her, when her mother, to whom rightfully she belonged, must be fairly pining for her. Why had he not had faith in the heavenly Father? "O thou of little faith," he thought to himself.

Chapter XXIV

THE DEATH OF KWASIND



THE time of waiting for Sieur Dantier was a time of uncertainty, for although they were under the protection of the governor, they were Huguenots and in a Catholic country. They did not know but that at any time some influence might be brought to bear upon the King to keep them in Canada.

France sent some of her most rigid and fanatic fathers to their new land; it was generally known that the Jesuit fathers were the most zealous in the rooting out of the faintest trace of Protestantism. Time was not pressed lightly by their energetic feet; they worked day and night. They were a band of wonderful men, wonderful in more senses than one. Many of them were going about showing by their horrible mutilated appearance the tortures they had received at the hands of the Indians. Nothing made them desist from their efforts in trying to save

the souls of their dusky brothers. They would come into the fort one day, and be gone the next, carrying their church furniture on their backs. Away into the wilds they would go, perhaps never to be heard from again, perhaps to die excruciating deaths. How they struggled, hoped, prayed, worked, and suffered! Frozen by the cold winds from the North, exhausted by the heat of the South, tortured with pine splinters and subjected to other barbarous cruelties, they still pressed on and on, and their cross was to be found in the extreme West and South where no other white foot had yet trod.

How much those men are to be admired for their great courage! Bravery is always admired and emulated, no matter how rash, fanatic, or even wrong the motive may be that stimulated the act. Of the many that suffered death, no annals remain to tell.

But however vigilant they were, Margot was surrounded by friends no less so, and Father Andree was not the least of these; he did not intend any more injury should befall the little maiden if humanity could prevent it. Father Andree was not of the Jesuit order, and he had grown so fond of her that he was content to see her happy again. He was liberal enough — too much so for Canada — to

leave her soul's welfare to the care of the heavenly Father.

It was beautiful in Canada now. Flowers peeped up here and there, dotting the landscape, and making it look like an immense flower garden, where but a little while ago snow had been in deep drifts. It was as if Nature, like a good housewife intent upon getting her house in perfect order after a hard winter, had called in the services of her attendants. First she sent the West Wind, who with his mouth puffed and blew until he had swept away all the brown leaves and twigs that littered the corners. Then she begged the big clouds to open and drop down their moisture, and so scrub away the ruffraff, and open up the hard pores of her land. She had to coax many times before the gentle showers fell, for they were reluctant to give up their big drops. Lastly she asked old Sol to shine, and shine so that all little creeping growing things hidden in their snuggeries should grow warm and send up their tender shoots and blossoms, and so carpet her house for her. Now the witness of all this scrubbing and drubbing was in the beauty of the country far and near.

Margot and her mother took long walks through the country, but with some escort other than Neptune, for there was always some one glad to go and

point out its hidden beauties ; sometimes Monsieur d'Albert when he could slip away (he was a much fêted man), sometimes Simon, but oftener Pierre. These walks answered a double purpose ; they helped to employ the time of waiting, and at the same time gave Margot an opportunity to study the flowers growing so abundantly about.

One day Monsieur and Margot walked quite a distance from the fort. They sought the woods and fallow places, for the day was warm. Monsieur as they walked related many a tale of Indian lore which he had heard from different tribes of the red men. Unexpectedly they chanced upon an Indian's camp. It was situated on a high point overlooking the sea. There, stretched upon his blanket, lay an Indian. He was emaciated and worn, and death stared him in the face. So Margot came upon her enemy, Great Chief Kwasind. Now there was no fear in her heart, if there ever had been any, only a great overwhelming pity, great enough to forgive any wrong done to her. Kwasind knew her at once, and when she looked at him, turned away his face. When Monsieur saw that the Indian's hold upon life was almost gone, he conquered his anger, which he had heretofore kept from cooling. Perhaps the pity he saw on Margot's face helped him.

"So, so, even so, must an Indian die a lingering death who molests children," he simply said in the Indian tongue, and with a grunt as stolid as the Indian's own, he was walking away.

Margot begged him to stop and see if he could not help the poor suffering man. He could not resist her pleading, and did what he could. He took a small medicine case from his pocket, and administered some simple remedy. Désiré d'Albert always carried this packet of ordinary remedies in case of just such an emergency as this. In this land of few doctors, every man was his own doctor or surgeon.

Monsieur asked Kwasind where he had been. He answered that he had been to the land of ice and snow; away where the polar bear swims and the brown seals make their home. There he had been lost amid the awful whiteness, and, separated from his clan, wandered day after day. At last he had reached here, but not before disease had gripped him with her iron hands. Now he awaited the end.

This was not the only visit Monsieur and Margot paid him. Monsieur took him under his care, and supplied his wants until the end came. Margot brought him choice bits from the governor's table to tempt

his failing appetite. But in a few weeks he died, his death made easy by her whom he had harmed.

He accepted everything done for him in a stoical way, only once saying: "You heap good, you heap good. Great Father good, Chief tired."

Now I have a pleasant thing to relate; also wonderful, so it seemed to Margot. It was the coming of Babette.

One morning when they were all at the breakfast table, she walked in unannounced, to the horror of the domestics. She looked as if she had but just gotten up, as staid, as neat, and as matter of fact as she was ever known to be; her hair so smooth, and her dress so fresh; not a hair out of place nor a ruffle disarranged; Babette, who was thought to be safe and at ease at Vrouw Van der Hoef's.

Monsieur d'Albert, ever considerate of all, had managed to send her word of the finding of her nursling and of the arrival of Madame. Knowing they were together, the longing to see them both was too much for the old dame. She thought that what Margot could stand she certainly could also. So she started with a party coming North.

What she endured was to be found upon her face only, for to have come so immaculate out of that

long tramp, she must have carried a change of clothing on her back. What sights she saw or what hardships she endured no one ever knew, for upon being questioned she would always say:

“*Mon Dieu ! mon Dieu !* I cannot talk of it — this dreadful country !”

Her delight at seeing her mistress and her “dear heart” knew no bounds. While she expressed her joy in terms of endearment to them both, she openly bewailed her neglect of Margot in letting her go alone into the woods. Madame had no word of blame for Babette when she pleaded for forgiveness. She soothed and comforted her, even praised her for her bravery in coming upon such a trip. Her mother’s heart made her understand what the old nurse had passed through.

Now was indeed a time of rejoicing, for it happened that that day the dear father also arrived. They all said that Babette was the harbinger of good luck.

They set sail immediately for New York. Monsieur quietly had had everything in readiness to start the moment the Sieur should come, for he deemed it wiser to be out on the ocean toward a harbor of safety than to stay any longer than necessary in the enemy’s country.

Chapter XXV

MARGOT AGAIN DANCES THE GAVOT



NCE again they were all together at Vrouw Van der Hoef's cozy home, Margot seated on the stoop, surrounded by a group of children, ever clamoring to hear again her adventures. To Jan, Mick, Hannah, and the others, she was a source of wonderment and secret admiration. Had she not had a thrilling experience and come out of it unscathed?

Pierre was at her side. He was always there when Uncle Désiré had nothing for him to do. Margot was gleefully happy, and she wore around her neck the beaded chain with the miniature attached to it. "*Le petit bon Dieu*" had brought her safe through her trouble, and in her face there was a great happiness and content. All the old longings for Paris and home were swept away; this land of abundance was good enough for her.

Pierre had been rather soberly listening to the chatter for a time, and regarding Margot with suspicion.

"Margot, did you ever see this?" he said, and from his pocket he drew a package and, after unwrapping it, produced a curl and a coin.

"Yes; it was mine," she replied, unhesitatingly. "I left it for the little boy whose clothes we took from the hut near Havre. How didst thou come by it?"

"You dear Majesty Two-shoes you! I thought so; and I believe Uncle Désiré knew it all the time. Well, I'm the boy that found it, and it is no more than just that I should have one-half, and the other half, of course, belongs to Captain Maurtaille, who left the clothes for you."

"Then there was no boy at all, and Babette was right?"

"No boy except myself. They were left for you."

"How good of Captain Maurtaille! Thou seest I needed them. Babette thought the good Lord had sent them to us. She said a poor woman would not be so careless as to leave so good a suit as that was."

"What have you done with them?"

"Babette guards them as the apple of her eye and has them packed away to show Maman."

"Margot, do put them on, and let us see

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you in the boy's clothes, — do, Margot," cried the children.

"No, indeed. They are horrid, but I will ask Babette to let you see them some day. I think she would better give them to some poor boy to wear, do not you?"

There was grave disapproval at this prosaic disposal of those clothes, one girl even saying, gravely:

"No; you ought to keep them and hand them down for your children's children to see. My grandmother has a chest full of just such relics as that."

But Margot thought her mother would think as she did, and, after she had seen the suit, make more practical use of it than to hide it away for moths to destroy. Then the children pleaded to see the sabots.

"*Ces mechants sabots !* Yes, I will get them and even put them on for you." She ran willingly and found the sabots. Pierre, kneeling before her, slipped off the pretty slippers, and soon had the sabots in their place. "I cannot walk very well in them, although I once danced the gavot in them."

"Oh, do dance it for us, Margot — do," cried all in a breath.

"I do not know whether I can or not, I have

not danced it for so long, and 'tis not so easy in sabots."

She took a few steps and then a few more; then with a little laugh she entered into the fun of it all, and on and on she danced. Her feet peeped in and out from beneath her petticoats, like twinkling stars in the heavens. The children, entranced, watched her with a reverence almost awesome in its intensity. When she had finished — and as yet the children had not expressed their delight in any way but by long-drawn-out "a-a-h's" — two men, who had been looking over their heads, gently pushed them aside. They were Monsieur Désiré d'Albert and Captain Hezekiah Brown.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Monsieur, as he had done on that day so long ago.

"'T is good for sore eyes to see the way those little feet fly about," interrupted the captain. "Now, if you only had on the trousers, you would be again the little boy who came on board the 'Willing Bark,' and hah! hah! thought them nice to walk about in but not pretty — oh, no, not pretty. But you have n't gained many roses that I can see." And he pinched her cheek as if to bring the roses out.

When the older people came to the door there

was much handshaking, for Captain Hezekiah Brown had not been into the town since he landed that day with his precious load. He was told of the episode of Little Majesty Two-shoes and her dog. He had had not an inkling of such dire happenings, and he was beside himself with rage. He stormed and blustered for one good hour — in fact, he got not over it all day long, and in the midst of other things he broke out into mutterings and said:

“ ’Pon my soul, if I had known of it some one would have got hurt! ” and much more, with expletives that were not always nice for little ears to hear.

When they had gone their several ways, Margot went to find the sabots to put them away. The children had put them on, and many pairs of little feet had tried to see if they too could not dance in them as Margot did. One she could not find — it was lost. Perhaps Master Pierre knew what had become of it, and mayhap it had gone to keep company with the golden curl and the louis-d’or piece. Pierre had made a vow to himself — but many children do that, and must not always be taken seriously — that when Margot grew old enough, if she would consent she should be his little wife, and in those days maidens married young.

It seems to me that there is a record somewhere of a beautiful French maiden, who had been captured by the savages as a child, being married at the early age of fifteen to the talented nephew of the great traveller, Monsieur Désiré d'Albert, and that her family grew up to be one of the most distinguished families of the South. But I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement, and, moreover, with it we have naught to do, for this is no love story.

Sieur Dantier lived for a few years in Maryland. From there he moved to Virginia, where he built a beautiful and substantial home. He became an extensive land owner, owning many slaves and entertaining in a royal way. In Virginia the rest of Margot's happy girlhood was passed.

Here in time there came to be quite a colony of old-time friends. Simon Fargè, helped by Sieur Dantier, hung out a very unpretentious sign over the door of a little shop; and before he closed his eyes, after a long and varied life, he had become a rich shoe merchant.

Monsieur d'Albert and Pierre were always Margot's most devoted admirers, tending to her every wish. It was Désiré d'Albert who would say, heaving a terrible heart-racking sigh :

“Ah, if I could only slip off thirty years, your chance would be small, my nephew Pierre. You lucky dog!”

At which Pierre would make answer:

“How about that domestic hearth, Uncle Désiré, that you have told me about so often? I believe there never was one built that could hold you contented by its side.”

Margot Dantier was not spoiled by so much adulation, and she did not disappoint the expectations of her dearest friends. Her sweet nature only became more refined and lovable from the fire of trouble she had passed through, and the devotion that marked her womanhood.



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